

# Commitment to Lifelong Learning in a Caring Environment



**2023-2024**

## **Thomas Jefferson Middle School Parent/Guardian/Student Handbook**

655 Teaneck Road  
Teaneck, NJ 07666  
(201) 833-5471  
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[www.teaneckschools.org](http://www.teaneckschools.org)

***The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.***

***Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.***

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

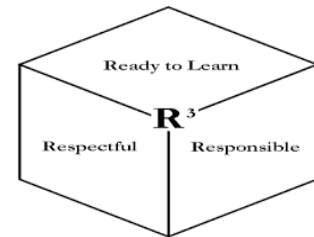
Fall 2023

Dear Thomas Jefferson Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome to Thomas Jefferson Middle School and to the 2023 – 2024 academic year. New beginnings, new opportunities, and infinite possibilities await each of us. Our motto at Thomas Jefferson Middle School continues to be ***Lifelong Learning in a Caring Environment*** – and each of you, the students, as an important and integral member of this community, is called to learn both within and beyond your classrooms and to care for, respect and value each person with whom you come in contact.

Our Student Pledge of Respect:

- I promise to be Respectful to myself and others.
- I promise to be Responsible for my choices and actions.
- I promise to come to school prepared and Ready to Learn.



***Celebrating Kindness is the Thomas Jefferson way!***

The administrative team here at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Ms. Nina Odatalla, Principal, Mr. Ramon Ortiz, Assistant Principal for Grades 5 and 7 and Mr. Nicholas DeBlasio, Assistant Principal for Grades 6 and 8, and your teachers are committed to helping you progress seamlessly from middle school to high school. This student handbook will help you understand your rights and responsibilities as the entire Thomas Jefferson community strives toward maintaining a safe, clean, healthy school environment. It is important that you read and become familiar with the information about the Thomas Jefferson Middle School philosophy, expectations, activities, guidance, and rules so that you will be well prepared to take advantage of what is offered here. If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to ask your teachers, school counselor, Assistant Principals, or me.

Please know that we, as administrators and faculty members, commit to two major goals for every student:

- To help you position yourself as a lifelong and engaged learner. To this end, you are encouraged to read every day. Read and write as much as you can for school and for pleasure.
- To help you respect yourself and all others with whom you come in contact. Show this respect at all times and in all situations.

Have a wonderful year!

Sincerely,

*Nina Odatalla*

Ms. Nina Odatalla  
Principal

This handbook is designed to help students meet their goals. The procedures contained within are to help students adjust to our school and to become successful. **The expectations are in effect whether a student is in school, visiting another school within the district, before, during, or after school, and for all school-sponsored activities.** This handbook is designed in conjunction with District, State, and Federal law. **PLEASE KEEP THIS STUDENT HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT HANDY FOR REFERENCE DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.**

**DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

The Teaneck Public School District educates and empowers students by providing a high-quality, rigorous educational experience that prepares students for success within a diverse, global society.

**VISION**

The Teaneck Advantage: *Educational Excellence for All*



**THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Thomas Jefferson Middle School is to ensure that all work to meet their highest level of academic achievement. We are dedicated to:

- Implementing the highest of standards.
- Empowering our students to become lifelong learners who can identify their own strengths, learning styles and areas in need of improvement.
- Nurturing our students’ development as they become safe, responsible, and respectful members of society.
- Partnering with all stakeholders in developing our student’s skills to participate in the local and global community.

We will consistently re-evaluate and reconstruct curricula as necessary to prepare our students with the academic, interpersonal and technological skills needed to participate in the local and global community.

**THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL ALMA MATER**

**“TJ Pride”**

*Music by Daniel Sullivan and Molly Frieri Neff*

<b>E N G L I S H</b>	<p><i>Time to learn and time to grow Stronger and smarter every day, Giving us chances wherever we go, Letting us choose our own way. Here we stand, always tall and proud, Sharing our voices aloud, Here and now. Moving forward side by side, With Thomas Jefferson pride, Our TJ pride.</i></p>	<b>E S P A Ñ O L</b>
	<p><i>Aprender y a crecer Somos mas fuertes cada día Tanto para obtener Siempre con la armonía Cada voz llena de valor Como semilla a flor Triunfar Adelante sin parar Nuestra vida escolar En te jota</i></p>	

## **THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL AT A GLANCE**

Thomas Jefferson is one of two Teaneck middle schools housing grades 5 through 8. The middle schools in Teaneck are geared toward a population transitioning from childhood to adolescence. Core subjects are Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, World Language, and Physical Education & Comprehensive Health. Technology is infused in all areas of instruction.

The [Encore & Exploratory Courses](#) consist of a series of requirements and electives in the Visual& Performing Arts and Computer Science & Design Thinking. A student's program may also include: Remedial, Special Education, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL), Accelerated Social Studies, English or Science, and Advanced Mathematics Seminar (AMS).

## **Thomas Jefferson Middle School Parent Teacher Organization (PTA)**

All families and staff members are invited to join the Thomas Jefferson Middle School Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA actively supports programs, assemblies, and activities and is an important voice in the Thomas Jefferson Middle School community. [Please get involved with the PTA!](#)

## **DISTRICT DIRECTORY**

- **THOMAS JEFFERSON STAFF**
- **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION**
- **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **A Word to Parents/Guardians—How You Can Help Your Child**

- Download and continuously review your child's progress on [Skyward](#).
- Ensure your child has a Thomas Jefferson Student Planner/Passbook at all times. (All students are given a planner/passbook. If the planner/passbook is lost a replacement must be purchased for \$5.)
- Volunteer in the classroom or on field trips.
- Arrange for parent-teacher conferences.
- Communicate with the teacher. Point out your child's strengths, likes, and dislikes. Share observations. Help the teacher get to know your child so that instruction can be tailored to the student's needs.
- Respond promptly when the teacher asks you to call or visit.
- Be actively involved in your child's course selection.
- Find out about tests. Find out when tests are given and how you will be informed of the results.
- Come to Parent-Teacher Association, Building Quality Management Team, and Back-to-School meetings.
- Attend special performances.
- Encourage a minimum of thirty (30) minutes of reading per day.
- Establish and adhere to a regular bedtime.
- Establish time for homework and maintain a schedule. Emphasize the positive to encourage your child's best work.
- Know how much homework is assigned and what your child is expected to accomplish.
- Provide a quiet place to study. Turn off the distractions. Limit access to social media and computer use.
- Encourage positive peer-helping relationships through group study. Help organize a study group in your home, community center, church, temple, or mosque.
- Identify your child's strengths and weaknesses. Praise good performance; get help when there are difficulties.
- Reinforce learning with visits to museums, theaters, parks, and special events. Learning can occur anywhere!
- Monitor grades. Be informed of tests and quiz scores. Check Google Classroom and Google Sites for information on upcoming assessments and [Skyward](#) for grades.
- Be a role model. The school can help develop a child's talents but it is the parent/guardian and other involved adults who shape the child's attitudes and opinions about learning.
- Emphasize the positive things your child does.
- Encourage your child to participate in [extracurricular activities, clubs](#), and/or [interscholastic sports](#). (Please see the [form](#) below).



## Extracurricular Activities Eligibility Form



To participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, and/or interscholastic sports, students must adhere to the eligibility criteria listed below.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- For a student to participate in extracurricular activities the parent/guardian and student must first read, sign, and return this Eligibility Form to the program advisor and **the student must not be on Social Probation...**
  - The student must remain in Good Academic Standing**
    - Passing all subjects
    - Less than 10 tardies/absences
  - The student can not accumulate 12 or more points due to disciplinary action or have been suspended from school**

### TO REGAIN ELIGIBILITY

- **Students may regain access to all extracurricular activities after 4 weeks if...**
  - **Passing all subjects**
  - **Exhibit positive behaviors in school and have no additional suspensions**
  - **Attendance improves**
  
- **In all instances, the building administrator shall be the final arbiter of student eligibility.**

By signing below, we agree to the terms specified above.

Name of Club(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **A Parent Guide: WHAT IF...**

- ❑ ***What if you want to find out about your child's progress or test scores after viewing [Skyward](#)?***

Call the school counselors:

<a href="#">Mr. Robert Davis</a>	(201) 833-5476	7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade
<a href="#">Ms. Meredith Martino</a>	(201) 833-5458	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade

- ❑ ***What if you want to ask specific questions about a specific class or incident in class?***

[Email that teacher](#) first and/or leave a message with the Main Office at (201) 833-5471.

- ❑ ***What if you want to ask specific questions about disciplinary action, such as detention?***

If assigned by a teacher, [email](#) the teacher first. If assigned by the office, email, one of the Assistant Principals: [Mr. Ortiz](#) (5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grades) or [Mr. DeBlasio](#) (6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grades).

- ❑ ***What if you want to have a parent conference?***

Call the School Counseling Office at (201) 833-5475. A conference can be arranged with a specific teacher or with all four core teachers. Conferences may also be arranged with encore teachers.

- ❑ ***What if you have questions about Special Education services?***

You can call one of the Child Study Team members: Mr. Morrison at (201) 833-3981, or Ms. Jaafar at (201) 862-2311, or Ms. Curley at (201) 833-5573.

- ❑ ***What if you have concerns about health issues?***

Call or [email](#) the school nurse, Ms. Cecilia Chan at (201) 833-5480.

- ❑ ***What if you want to get homework for your child who is absent?***

[Email](#) the teacher for further information.

- ❑ ***What if you want to collaborate with the Building Quality Management Team ?***

The BQMT is a collaborative body of stakeholders (i.e. parents/guardians, teachers, support staff, administration) who oversee a process through which student achievement is promoted through the collaborative process of shared decision-making. The desired outcome is effective decision-making to guide the policies of the school and advance the goals developed in the School Improvement Plan. The BQMT is a vital forum for shaping school life for staff and students.

BQMT tasks include:

- Improving the building's environment
- Implementing academic and/or curricular projects and programs
- Implementing human relations projects and programs

**Parent volunteers are needed! Please call (201) 833-5470 if you would like to be a part of the BQMT.**

- ❑ ***What if you want to join the Parent Teacher Association?***

Visit the [PTA website](#) for more information.

## **School Hours**

**Breakfast Club**

**7:45 a.m.**

*(The entrance to the Breakfast Club is through the cafeteria doors accessed adjacent to the Fycke Lane parking lot.)*

**Bell to Enter T. J.**

**8:20 a.m.**

**Late Bell**

**8:30 a.m.** *(All students must be in Homeroom by 8:30 a.m.)*

**Dismissal (Grades 5)**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Dismissal (Grades 6, 7 & 8)\*\***

**3:14 p.m.**

**Detention (Grades 5)**

**3:00 p.m.-3:15 p.m.**

**Detention (Grades 6, 7 & 8)**

**3:20 p.m.-3:45 p.m.**

**Clubs/Extracurricular**

**No later than 4:00 p.m.** *(please verify with Club Advisor)*

- ❑ **Students are not permitted to be on school grounds or in the school building before 8:20 a.m.** unless they have a pass to work with a teacher, attending a club or are attending the Breakfast Club. All students attending any morning activity must adhere to the Breakfast Club's time and entrance. There is no outdoor or hall supervision until 8:20 a.m.
  
- ❑ **At dismissal, all students are expected to leave the building immediately and go directly home,** unless they are in the [School-Age Child Care \(SACC\)](#) program, are receiving extra help from a teacher, are participating in a school-sponsored event under the direct supervision of a teacher or must remain for disciplinary reasons.
  
- ❑ **Half-days end at 12:30 p.m. for grades 5 and 12:48 p.m. for grades 6, 7 & 8.**
  
- ❑ **District Calendar**



# THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## FULL-DAY SCHEDULE

<b>Grades 5</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>Grades 6-8</b>
8:30-8:35	<i>Homeroom</i>	8:30-8:35
8:35-8:45	<i>Patriot Period*</i>	8:35-8:45
8:45-9:38	<b>1</b>	8:45-9:38
9:41-10:34	<b>2</b>	9:41-10:34
10:37-11:30	<b>3</b>	10:37-11:30
11:33-11:59	<b>4A</b>	11:33-11:59
12:00-12:26	<b>4B</b>	12:00-12:26
12:29-12:55	<b>5A</b>	12:29-12:55
12:56-1:22	<b>5B</b>	12:56-1:22
1:25-2:18	<b>6</b>	1:25-2:18
2:21-3:00	<b>7</b>	2:21-3:14

## HALF-DAY SCHEDULE

<b>Grades 5</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>Grades 6-8</b>
8:30-8:35	<i>Homeroom</i>	8:30-8:35
8:35-8:45	<i>Patriot Period*</i>	8:35-8:45
8:45-9:23	<b>1</b>	8:45-9:23
9:26-10:04	<b>2</b>	9:26-10:04
10:07-10:42	<b>3</b>	10:07-10:42
10:45-11:22	<b>4/5</b>	10:45-11:22
11:25-12:02	<b>6</b>	11:25-12:02
12:05-12:30	<b>7</b>	12:05-12:48

\*Students will start off their day engaging in Social-Emotional Learning activities during Patriot Period:  
Mindful Monday - Tabulate Tuesday - Wellness Wednesday - DEAR Thursday - Pride Day Friday

## Emergency Closings

Please refer to the district website for information regarding emergency closings.

## Breakfast Club and Extended Day Program

- ❑ You may bring your child to the Thomas Jefferson Middle School cafeteria for the Breakfast Club at 8:00 a.m. **The entrance to the Breakfast Club is through the cafeteria doors accessed adjacent to the Fycke Lane parking lot.** There, they may buy breakfast until 8:15 a.m., eat breakfast brought from home, work on a project with a friend, catch up on homework, study, or just chat with friends. **Students must stay in the Breakfast Club once they enter.** The only exception to this regulation is if a student has a pre-arranged appointment with a member of the faculty.
- ❑ [Breakfast Costs](#) (Students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch are entitled to free or reduced breakfast).
- ❑ [School-Age Child Care \(SACC\)](#) is provided after school until 6:15 p.m. every day for a fee. You may call the Community Education Center/SACC at (201) 833-5514 for information.

## Emergency Contact Forms

Please email [Ms. Fernandez](#) if there are any changes such as a new phone number at work or home, new address, new neighbor or relative assigned to pick up in an emergency.

***If students need to be picked up at school for any reason by someone other than parents/guardians, we must have written authorization. A phone call authorizing us to release a student is not enough. Parents/guardians must include the names of neighbors and relatives who are allowed to pick up students on Skyward.***

## Safety To and From School

- ❑ The Teaneck Police Department will enforce N.J.S.A. Title 39:4-34 prohibiting pedestrians from walking in a street where a sidewalk is provided. The message is “Walk on the sidewalk, not in the street.” A summons may be issued to those who choose to violate this statute.
- ❑ We ask that students do not loiter in front of private homes, the public library, office buildings, and/or stores. We also ask and remind all students to be respectful, responsible, and considerate of our neighbors.
- ❑ If students are to wait for a bus, they are to stay out of the street. They should not engage in dangerous play such as chasing games or throwing snowballs at each other.
- ❑ Due to congestion in the Salem St. and Fycke Lane parking lots, and for safety reasons, parents are not allowed to pick up or drop off students in the staff parking lot. We recommend that students be dropped off on Fycke Lane, Hartwell Street, or Salem Street.
- ❑ **Wall ball, touch football, and other ball games are not permitted before or after school.**
- ❑ **SKATEBOARDS & SCOOTERS MUST NOT BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL (5514 - STUDENT USE OF VEHICLES).**
- ❑ By law, students are required to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle. Students must bring a lock to secure the bicycle on the bike rack, located at the Fycke Lane 5<sup>th</sup> grade entrance for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades and the Salem Street entrance for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- ❑ **Students are not permitted to be anywhere on school grounds prior to 8:20 a.m. unless they have a pass to meet with a teacher/administrator or are going to the Breakfast Club.**

## **Student Supervision After-School Dismissal**

In accordance with [Board Policy #8601](#), any parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a pupil attending a District-operated school or program in grades K-12, where the pupil is not eligible for District-provided transportation or is eligible and elects not to use District-provided transportation after dismissal may request the school or program not release the pupil to walk home after dismissal unless the pupil is released to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or escort(s) designated by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may designate up to 3 escorts.

***Only those parents or legal guardians requesting the school or program not release their child(ren) to walk home after school dismissal unless the child(ren) is released to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or designated escort need to complete the Request Form.***

In order for the school administration to effectively implement the requirements of this policy and to ensure the safety and security of pupils who will be released to a parent(s), legal guardian(s) or designated escort, the parental request shall be applicable for every school day, early dismissal or early dismissal due to weather or other emergency. The request will apply for a duration period of the entire school year. The Request Form must be re-submitted at the end of the duration period. In addition, a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may rescind their request by submitting a written request to the Principal or Program Director indicating the date in which the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) no longer requests the school provide supervision of their child(ren) after school. The child(ren) will be dismissed in accordance with the typical dismissal protocol effective the date indicated in the rescinding request.

The pupil(s) shall be supervised by school staff in the designated area of the building and will only be released when the parent(s), legal guardian(s) or designated escort arrives to pick up the pupil. In the event the parent(s), legal guardian(s) or designated escort does not arrive to pick up their child(ren) after the dismissal time of school, the Principal or designee will attempt to contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) using the District's emergency call procedures.

**This option should not be viewed as an after-care program.** The expectation is that parent(s), legal guardian(s) or designated escort will arrive to pick up their child(ren) at dismissal time, no later than 3:15 p.m. for students in grades 5, and no later than 3:30 p.m. for students in grades 6, 7 and 8. If you require other after-care arrangements please visit the Teaneck Community Education Center. The center offers [School Age Child Care \(SACC\)](#) every day after school in the cafeteria until 6:15 p.m. There is a fee for students to participate in this program. Please call the Teaneck Community Education Center at (201)-833-5514 for information.

## **Grade Level Entrances**

**In the morning, students will enter through the following doors:**

- Fifth Grade** – Fycke Lane Entrance (*near the garden*)
- Sixth Grade** – Teaneck Road Entrance (*front of the building by the flagpole*)
- Seventh Grade** – Salem Street Entrance (*nearest the circle*)
- Eighth Grade** – Salem Street Entrance (*farthest from the circle*)

**Students are not allowed to enter the building before 8:20 a.m. unless they have a pass from a teacher or are going to the Breakfast Club through Fycke Lane.**

- Parents/Guardians:** When picking up/dropping off your children at school, you should be aware of and obey all **NO PARKING** signs. According to the Teaneck Police, sitting in a vehicle in an area posted with **NO PARKING** signs and waiting for school dismissal is a parking violation. Drivers who park on the opposite side of Fycke Lane and encourage children to cross the street to get to them are putting their children in danger. Arrange a pick-up location away from this very crowded area.

## Procedures for Visiting Thomas Jefferson Middle School

In the best interest of the safety of our students and of our staff, these Visitor Procedures apply to all persons in the building who are not staff or professional interns.

- **Parking Procedure:** The visitor parking spots are located on the left along the fence as you enter the Salem Street lot and are designated with 'Visitor Parking' signs. Visitors are not to park in any other spots in the Salem St. or Fycke Lane parking lots. These parking spots are designated for faculty and staff. Visitors are not to park in areas designated with yellow lines.
- **Entrance Procedure:** Visitors MUST use the entrance to Thomas Jefferson closest to Hartwell St. on the Salem St. circle. A visitor will be buzzed into the building and must proceed directly to the Security Desk asked about the purpose of their visit (e.g. picking up your child, volunteering in a classroom, etc.), and receive a visitor's pass which requires photo identification. Visitor passes must be worn and visible at all times while in the building. A staff member shall escort the visitor to the appropriate location.
  - ❖ No person will enter any school building under the control of the Teaneck Board of Education without first requesting, and then being approved for an official visit appointment with the school/building Principal and/or his/her designee. **Such appointment shall not be granted during the first 45 minutes or the last 45 minutes of any school day, as to be least disruptive to the instructional schedule. Please contact the principal's administrative assistant at 201-833-5470 to schedule an appointment.**

**Dropping off items:** Any item that needs to be dropped off for a student will be given to security and the main office will contact the student to pick up the item(s). Students should only receive communication from the main office regarding item(s) to be picked up. Students are not permitted to utilize their cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches at any time while school is in session. [Utilizing cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches while in school](#) is contrary to the [code of conduct](#) and will result in disciplinary action.

**Early Dismissal Parent/Guardian:** Parent/Guardians must adhere to the Entrance Procedure above, be listed as a family/guardian member on [Skyward](#), have photo identification, and complete an Off Campus Pass with the main office administrative assistant before the student is dismissed. Students will be called down to the main office. Students should only receive communication from the main office regarding early dismissal. Students are not permitted to utilize their cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches at any time while school is in session. [Utilizing cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches while in school](#) is contrary to the [code of conduct](#) and will result in disciplinary action.

**Early Dismissal Nurse:** Early dismissal by our school nurse due to an illness will be initiated by a student's visit to the health office and a subsequent phone call from our school nurse. (Students are not permitted to utilize their cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches at any time while school is in session. [Utilizing cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches while in school](#) is contrary to the [code of conduct](#) and will result in disciplinary action.) The school nurse shall complete an Off Campus Pass and meet the parent/guardian at the Eighth Grade – Salem Street Entrance (farthest from the circle).

**No one is permitted to wander the hallways, make unscheduled classroom or activity visits, or appear in any office unannounced.**

## **Lockers**

- Lockers are the property of the Teaneck Board of Education and may be inspected by school personnel at any time and without notice ([5770](#)).
- Lockers can only be accessed by 6,7 and 8th-grade students before 1st period, lunch/WIN, and after 7th period.
- Do not share your locker combination or your locker with anyone.
- Locker space is tight but sufficient, so long as you do not clutter or overfill your locker.
- Lockers must be kept locked at all times.
- Locker “clean-outs” will be held at the end of each marking period.
- Items left in unlocked lockers will be placed in “lost and found.”

## **Back Packs**

- Back Packs are permitted for all 5th-grade students and can be carried from class to class. Rolling bags/drag-along packs are not permitted for use in the school.

## **Bicycles**

- You must, in accordance with State law, wear approved helmets and follow all traffic regulations.
- Skateboards and scooters are not permitted on school grounds.
- Bicycles must be parked in the bike rack and locked up with your own lock. If you do not lock up your bicycle, you are risking having it stolen. The school is not liable for stolen property.
- Bicycles must not be ridden on school property. Walk with your bicycle in the parking lots or on the walkways.

## **Homework**

- Your teachers will provide you with their guidelines and expectations regarding homework.
- Homework has several purposes: (a) to practice what has been recently taught, (b) to keep those skills and concepts you have learned fresh in your mind, and (c) to challenge and expand your thinking.
- When you have no assigned homework, it is wise to read ahead and review what you have done over the past several weeks.
- Successful students always have a book on hand to read for pleasure.
- When you are absent, you should complete and turn in missed homework assignments per your teachers' expectations.
- It is your responsibility to know your teachers' expectations for making up missed work. You need to ask them for assignments you have missed and arrange a time to get extra help if you have missed instruction and are in need of assistance. Your teachers will help you with this if you ask.
- You will be expected to make up any work that is missing or incomplete.
- Check [Skyward](#) for missing assignments. Check your teachers' Google Classroom or Google Site for more detailed information regarding homework and projects.

## **Student Counseling Department**

School counselors are here to help you. Your school counselor will help answer scheduling questions and will be available to discuss personal problems and to offer advice and information regarding the many other things that are part of your life, in and out of Thomas Jefferson Middle School. Times can be difficult – with certain classes, with the loss of a friend, and during other times – so it is always a good idea to talk with a counselor when you feel the need for support and/or guidance. Your school counselor can help you handle life’s challenges.

[Mr. Davis](#) is the counselor for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades

[Ms. Martino](#) is the counselor for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades.

## **SKYWARD FAMILY ACCESS**

[Skyward Family Access](#) is a web-based application that allows you to track information regarding your child’s progress for the current year. You may access this program by connecting to our secured server to view assignments, attendance, report card grades, disciplinary actions, and other school information. Because student information is confidential and sensitive, all parents will be required to register for this service and provide proof of guardianship or parental rights before a Family Access account can be created. For more information, please visit our [website](#) and click on “Family Access” under the Quick Links heading.

## **Google Classroom and Sites**

Teachers use Google Classroom and Google Sites as informational platforms to post assignments, facilitate instructional delivery and enhance the learning experiences for students. The purpose of these tools is to enable communication among teachers, administrators, parents, and students that can help foster student achievement beyond the classroom walls.

Notifications are updated frequently and include valuable information such as class events, course outlines, projects, and homework. Google Classroom and Google Sites information will be communicated to you by each student’s teachers.

## **School Nursing Services**

[Ms. Chan](#), our school nurse, is always available to respond to emergencies, accidents, and sudden illnesses, except during her lunch period. [Ms. Chan's](#) lunch is usually scheduled from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Students who need assistance during this time should report to the Main Office.

- ❑ If medication is brought to school, it must be in the original container and clearly labeled with the doctor’s orders. It must be brought directly to [Ms. Chan](#) and will be securely stored in her office. Only the nurse may administer medication except as set forth below in the case of life-threatening illnesses.
- ❑ If your child has diabetes and/or asthma or any other life-threatening or chronic illness, please contact [Ms. Chan](#) regarding an individual health care plan.

## **Self-Administration of Medications:**

Students who need to take medication during school hours and who are capable of self-administration of medication for diabetes, asthma, or other life-threatening illnesses are required to:

1. Submit a written request by the parent or guardian for permission for the student to self-administer medication.
2. Submit a written certification from the physician that the pupil has diabetes, asthma, or other life-threatening illness and is capable of and has been instructed in the proper method of self-administration of medication.

3. Submit a written statement by the parent or guardian acknowledging that neither the District nor the school shall incur liability as a result of any injury arising from the self-administration of medication by the pupil and that the parent or guardian shall hold harmless the District and its employees or agents against any no claims arising out of the self-administration of medication by the pupil.
4. The permission is effective for the school year for which it is granted and must be renewed for each subsequent school year upon fulfillment of the above requirements.
5. In situations where a pupil is authorized to use a nebulizer to treat asthma during school hours, the pupil shall submit a treatment plan prepared by a physician, which shall identify, at a minimum, asthma triggers.
6. **Students who require epinephrine via epi-pen for anaphylaxis during school hours are required to abide by the following regulations:**
  - a. Submit a written request by the parent/guardian for the administration of the epi-pen by the school nurse or his or her designee.
  - b. Submit written orders from a physician or advanced-practice nurse that the pupil requires epinephrine for anaphylaxis and does not have the capability for self-administration of the medication.
  - c. Submit a written statement by the parent or guardian acknowledging that neither the District nor the school shall incur liability as a result of any injury arising from the administration of medication to the pupil and that the parent or guardian shall hold harmless the District and its employees or agents against any claims arising out of the administration of medication to the pupil.

## **Lunch**

### ***Students:***

- ❑ In order to purchase lunch, you must have a [balance in your lunch account](#).
- ❑ Lunches are cooked at Thomas Jefferson Middle School and will be pre-packaged for distribution. Students may purchase a whole lunch, juices, or just snacks. Students may choose to bring their entire lunch from home. ***Please do not bring glass bottles.*** If you lose your lunch money, ask to see the Principal or his/her designee.

### ***Parents/Guardians:***

- ❑ It is possible to prepay for lunch. Students can use their ID codes to purchase lunch. You can add money to your child's lunch account by [paying online](#). The amount will be debited from the "lunch account" when lunch is purchased.
- ❑ Many parents find that prepaying for lunch is very convenient because it cuts down on the amount of money a child needs to bring to school, and it ensures that money will be spent on lunch and not junk food! ***We encourage all parents to prepay for lunch! Please visit our [website](#) for more information regarding meal costs.***

## **Free and Reduced Lunch**

If your family qualifies for the Federal Lunch Program, parents/guardians must fill out the [online lunch application](#) on the first day of school. You need only to complete one application for all your children in the Teaneck Public Schools, making sure you list all your children on the one form and the school(s) they attend. [Lunch applications](#) are digital and available on the district website.

## **Lunchroom Procedures**

- ❑ You and those with whom you share a table are responsible for the cleanliness of the table and of the floor area immediately under and around the table.
- ❑ Speak in a conversational tone of voice.
- ❑ Wait in line in a single file.
- ❑ At all times, speak to the cafeteria staff respectfully.
- ❑ Always clean up after yourself!
- ❑ Place your trash in the appropriate trash can.
- ❑ When the teachers in the cafeteria signal you to pay attention, please stop talking immediately.
- ❑ If there is a fire drill during lunch, leave your lunch on the table, follow the teachers' directions, and quietly move to the exit doors.

## **Custodial Staff**

The custodians are here to help maintain the building. The custodian assigned to Thomas Jefferson Middle School at this time is Mr. Moses.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

***Students in grades five (5) through eight (8) are not permitted to have cakes, cookies, donuts, soda, special lunches, etc. in school, on their birthdays, or on their friends' birthdays.***



## **Class Field Trips**

Each grade level is strongly encouraged to take a minimum of two field trips each year. ***By Board policy, you cannot go on any trip unless you have returned a permission slip, signed by your parent/guardian, to your teacher. Permission must be in writing. You cannot use the telephone to call your parents for permission if you have forgotten your signed permission slip.*** Please refer to the [District policy regarding field trips](#).

Many field trips require some payment from your parents/guardians. If your family needs help with the cost of a field trip, the PTA may be able to assist. Discuss this possibility with your homeroom teacher or school counselor.

- ❑ We ask that all payments for field trips be made in **cash**.
- ❑ Participation in class trips and other school activities is contingent upon the exhibition of good behavior in the weeks and months prior to and during the trip.

## **After-School Clubs and Activities**

In addition to offering you regular assistance before and/or after school with your schoolwork, Thomas Jefferson Middle School offers you the opportunity to get together with friends to enjoy something special. You will be invited to join clubs and activities such as Basketball, Soccer, Cross Country, Band, Yearbook, STEPS Girls Mentoring Group, TJ Achievers, Environmental Activist Club, Kids Chronicle, Student Council, Orchestra, and Chorus. Clubs and activities are offered Tuesday through Thursday from 3:15 pm to 4:00 pm. To participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, and/or interscholastic sports, students must adhere to the [eligibility criteria](#).

## **Intramural Sports**

Intramural sports are offered Tuesday through Thursday from 3:15 pm to 4:00 pm. If you are a sports enthusiast interested in non-competitive games, you may participate if you bring a signed permission slip. A variety of activities, changing with the seasons, is offered. To participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, field trips, and/or interscholastic sports, students must adhere to the [eligibility criteria](#).

Intramural days are as follows:

<b>Tuesday</b>	-	5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Graders
<b>Wednesday</b>	-	7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> Graders
<b>Thursday</b>	-	Open Gym – all grades

## **School Office Telephone**

*The school office telephone is a business phone and is not for student use.*

In an emergency, you may get a pass from a teacher to use the phone in the Counseling Office.

## **Telephone Messages from Home**

In the event of an emergency, when you feel it is necessary to contact/notify your child, please call the School Counseling Office (201) 833-5475 or the main office (201) 833-5471.

## **Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices, including but not limited to radios, tablets, iPads, cameras, laser pointers, CD/DVD players, electronic gaming devices and systems, etc. are **not permitted in school unless specifically requested by staff for classroom use.** They create a distraction to the learning environment.

## **Cell Phones, Wireless Headphones, or Smart Watches**

A student may possess a cellular phone, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches but it must be kept in his/her locker during school hours. The use of cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, locker rooms, or during recess is **prohibited**. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off while the student is in the school building and may be turned on after school has concluded for the day and outside of the school building. They shall not be openly displayed and must be stored in the locker, or on their person completely out of sight. Any electronic device THAT IS VISIBLE will be confiscated.

- ❑ 1st Offense An administrative warning and the electronic device is confiscated. The device will be returned to the student at the conclusion of the school day.
- ❑ 2nd Offense An administrative discipline (1 Detention) and the electronic device is confiscated. The device will be returned to the student at the conclusion of the detention.
- ❑ 3rd Offense A more severe administrative discipline (1 Detention) and the electronic device is confiscated. The parent/guardian must meet with the administration and pick up the device after the meeting.

## **Your Personal Property**

The Board of Education recognizes that there are times when students may wish to bring property such as calculators, computers, laptops, electronic notebooks, and notepads, or other electronic equipment, leather jackets, musical instruments, and other valuable items to school. Students are encouraged, however, not to bring valuable personal property items to school. If students choose to bring valuable personal property to school, students should exercise appropriate supervision and control over their property. Parents are encouraged to have such valuable property insured against loss or theft. ***Students who leave personal possessions unattended on school premises do so at their own risk.*** The Board of Education shall not be responsible under any circumstances for the loss of a student's personal property in the case of loss or theft.

Lost items that are found on school premises are placed in the "Lost and Found" area, located in the back of the cafeteria. Lost articles not claimed by the end of the school year shall be given to charity or disposed of.

## **Lost and Found**

If you lose something, check the "Lost and Found" area in the cafeteria. Labeling your belongings (backpacks, hats, jackets, notebooks, etc.) will help you find missing items. If you find clothing and/or books, they must be placed in the

“Lost and Found” area in the cafeteria. Any other personal belongings (glasses, keys, etc.) found must be brought to the main office.

## **Auditorium Behavior**

Audience behavior at assemblies and performances is different from the behavior exhibited at sporting events. People attending performances in the auditorium need to show courtesy and respect to those who take the stage. Supportive behavior is strongly urged and appreciated. These behaviors include being silent and clapping when appropriate. Inappropriate behaviors include leaving to go to the bathroom during a performance (please wait until intermission), loud talking, loud cheering, whistling, chanting, calling out students’ names, or any other distracting behavior. Students who are disruptive during assemblies/performances will be immediately removed to the main office and disciplinary action may be taken. No food or drink is permitted into the auditorium at any time.

## **Progress Reports and Report Cards**

### ***Students:***

Progress Reports serve as a mode of communication between faculty members and parents, as well as an accurate indication of students’ academic progress. Progress Reports also allow for an open dialogue between students and teachers to enhance student academic status/progress. Students are encouraged to take advantage of Progress Reports and quickly speak with the teacher(s) in whose class(es) improvement is needed.

### ***Parents/Guardians:***

**Progress reports may be viewed on [Skyward](#) midway through each marking period.** Progress reports are completed by every teacher for every student to keep you and your family informed about your achievement, attitude, effort, and behavior. Please visit our [website](#) to view the dates Progress reports are available on [Skyward](#).

Parents can sign up for conferences online via [Skyward](#). Notification will be shared by the school once the window opens. You are encouraged to sign up as early as possible. Please visit our [website](#) to view specific conference dates.

A conference can be initiated by a teacher or you at any time during the school year. If a student is having trouble with schoolwork, homework, friends, or behavior, you can arrange a conference by emailing the teacher, calling the School Counseling Office at (201) 833-5475, or emailing your child’s school counselor.

## **Grading**

**A** = superior accomplishment, outstanding achievement

**B** = very good accomplishment, above-grade achievement

**C** = good accomplishment, at grade-level average

**D** = below grade-level achievement, minimal accomplishment

**F** = failure in accomplishment

### **Grading scale:**

<b>A+</b>	97-100	<b>C+</b>	77-79
<b>A</b>	93-96	<b>C</b>	73-76
<b>A-</b>	90-92	<b>C-</b>	70-72
<b>B+</b>	87-90	<b>D+</b>	67-69
<b>B</b>	83-86	<b>D</b>	63-66
<b>B-</b>	80-82	<b>D-</b>	60-62
		<b>F</b>	below 60

***You and your family should always feel free to ask a teacher for help in understanding how a particular grade was determined.***

## **PRINCIPAL’S HONORS:**

All Grades must be a minimum of an A or Excellent in all subjects.

For purposes of Principal’s Honors, no distinction or adjustment of grades will be made among math courses of different levels.

## **HONOR ROLL**

Minimum of an A in any two Core subjects (language arts, math, science, social studies) and no other grades lower than B or S. For the purposes of the Honor Roll, no distinction or adjustment of grades will be made among math courses of different levels.

## **Special Education and Related Services under I.D.E.A. and Section 504**

Children with disabilities will not be subject to discrimination based on disability and will be provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Such children are provided special education and related services, which may include services such as speech, occupational and physical therapy. Children with identified learning problems may receive extra help with their classroom work and study skills. Ask your School Counselor, the building Child Study Team, or the Section 504 Officer for information.

## **Eligibility for Special Education and Related Services:**

A student shall be determined eligible and classified eligible for special education and related services when it is determined that a student has one or more of the disabilities defined below and that the disability adversely affects the student’s educational performance and the student is in need of special education and related services

## **Categories of Disabilities:**

Auditory impaired, autistic, cognitively impaired, communication impaired, emotionally disturbed, multiply disabled, deaf/blindness, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, preschool child with a disability, social maladjustment, specific learning disability, traumatic brain injury, and visually impaired

## **SECTION 504 Services and Protections Under the Americans with Disabilities Act - (“ADA”)**

Section 504 is a federal law prohibiting discrimination in and by educational institutions (receiving federal funds) based upon disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law providing similar protections but this law is not limited to educational institutions. The laws are substantially similar. These laws apply to students, staff, and the general community. In order to be eligible for protection or services, an individual must have a defined physical or mental impairment which substantially impairs a “major life activity.” Documentation must be provided for your child to receive 504 accommodations.

## **Services and Protections for Students:**

A very limited number of students, who are not otherwise eligible for services as a “classified” child eligible for special education, may be eligible for Section 504 accommodations.

## **Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)**

New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:16-8.1 requires all school districts to have this service. The term “intervention” is used when teachers and other school personnel study and creatively problem-solve educational issues that place a student at risk for school failure. Using a team approach that also significantly involves parents, each school carefully considers the needs of students who are identified “at risk” for learning, behavior, and health problems. After careful consideration, strategies are put in place to work with the student and effectively address the issues at hand while assisting and providing support to the teacher.

The I&RS team is a multi-disciplinary team made up of administrators, teachers and staff members from diverse backgrounds who can offer expertise to the team. Parents/guardians may refer their son or daughter to the I&RS team. They should contact their child’s school counselor. They can help you start the process.

If the I&RS process exhausts all of the available school-based regular education interventions with minimal success, the student is often referred to the District Child Study Team (CST) for a comprehensive evaluation in order to gather additional information as well as to determine if the student is eligible for special education and related services. Even in these cases, the prior period of intervention is valuable. Prior intervention will illustrate that a referral is appropriate (as required by law) and it will help inform the CST team about strategies that have or have not produced success. **It is important that I&RS interventions not be seen as merely a waiting process or a “red tape” step for special education.** The recommendation for a CST evaluation could come directly from the I&RS team or from the parent at any time during the process. Please refer to Regulation 2460.1 Special Education – Location Identification, and Referral, which is available on the Board website, for further information.

## **Students Identified as Academically Gifted**

In the Teaneck Public Schools, students are evaluated and identified as academically gifted in the areas of mathematics and/or humanities. If you are one of these identified students, advanced courses in mathematics and special work in humanities are available.

## **New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA)**

The New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) are aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) and were created to measure students’ ability to apply their knowledge of concepts rather than memorizing facts. Please visit our [website](#) in the Spring to view specific dates for the NJSLA.

## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

This District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, social or economic status, or disability in admission or access to its programs and activities. The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. Sexual harassment is expressly prohibited. The District will not tolerate sexual harassment in any form. Title VI, 42 U.S.C. §2000d requires that all vocational opportunities will be offered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the American with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) apply to the District, its programs, services and activities. The District shall evaluate, identify, and provide free appropriate education to all students who are individuals with disabilities under federal law and reside within the district. Under Section 504 and the ADA, “an individual with a disability” is defined as a person who has a mental or physical impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working; or has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such impairment. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, a student may be classified as eligible for special education and related services based upon 13 categories of disabilities. For further information, contact the Child Study Team. The District will furnish auxiliary aids and services to students, employees, parents/guardians, and members of the public who have disabilities to the extent necessary for communications with other persons, unless it will result in an undue burden on, or a fundamental alteration in the program.

Any person having inquiries concerning the district's compliance with Title VI, Title IX, ADA, the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, (NJ LAD) or Section 504, is directed to contact the Affirmative Action Officer.

The District has a grievance procedure for discrimination complaints. Please speak with the Affirmative Action Officer for a description of this procedure. She or he will also supply information as to the existence and location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by disabled persons.

Any parent/guardian who believes that a student may be eligible for services under Section 504 should seek assistance from the Section 504 Officer.

## **TRANSGENDER STUDENTS**

The District is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students. The District shall ensure that all students, including transgender students, have equal educational opportunities and equal access to the District's educational programs and activities. The District will comply with Federal and State laws and regulations regarding transgender students and no student shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression. The District will ensure the privacy of transgender students to the extent permitted by law.

The District will not question or disregard the assertion of a student's gender identity. However, the Superintendent or designee may question a student's asserted gender identity when there is credible basis for believing the student's gender identity is being asserted for some improper purpose.

The District recognizes school-related issues regarding transgender students will vary on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the Superintendent or designee will meet with the parent and the student to discuss school-related issues, including but not limited to, names/pronouns, student records, restrooms, locker rooms, physical education classes, intramurals programs, interscholastic athletics, and dress codes.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The District prohibits any conduct or expression that may be construed as sexual harassment of a student by an employee of the district, another student or an outside vendor. Sexual harassment may include, but it is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances or suggestions, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical contacts of a sexual nature, tormenting, annoying, teasing, remarks, jokes, stories, cartoons, which have the purpose or effect of interfering with the person's performance or creating an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment and that would not have happened but for the pupil's gender. A violation of this provision will result in disciplinary action.

Any student who believes he or she has been the subject of harassment should tell the harasser to "stop" and should promptly complain to the building Principal or the Affirmative Action Officer, who will investigate all complaints.

## **DATING VIOLENCE**

Please refer to Policy and Regulation #5519 Dating Violence, which is available on the Board website, for information regarding the District's dating violence policy.

## **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, and BULLYING (HIB)**

Bullying, harassment and intimidation are defined as any gesture, written, verbal, physical act, or electronic communication that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school property and that:

1. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
2. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of school; or
3. creates a hostile educational environment by interfering with the student's education or by severely or pervasively causing person or emotional harm to the student.

School employees (or contracted service providers) who have witnessed or have reliable information that a student has been subject to harassment, intimidation, or bullying must report the information to the School Principal on the same day they discover the information. The school employee and the Principal must complete a written report within two school days of the initial verbal report. All staff members are immune from civil liability for reports made in good faith. Reprisal and retaliation are prohibited against any person who reports acts of student harassment, intimidation or bullying. Teachers or students may report anonymously by placing a written report in the Principal's mailbox. However, formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Principal shall inform the parents/guardians of all students involved that an incident of HIB has been reported. The Principal may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services. An investigation must be initiated by the Principal within one day of the incident being reported verbally and the investigation must be conducted by the school anti-bullying specialist. The Principal may appoint additional personnel to assist, if necessary. The investigation must be prompt, thorough, and efficient. The investigation will permit reports that are oral, written or electronic.

The anti-bullying specialist's investigation must be completed within ten (10) school days of the written incident report. The school anti-bullying specialist may amend the original report to reflect information anticipated but not yet received by the end of the ten (10) day period. Teachers and staff members must always monitor for further incidents of bullying, harassment or intimidation. Warn students of the consequences of continued behavior.

The school anti-bullying specialist's investigation results must be reported to the superintendent within two school days of completion. The superintendent may take or recommend appropriate action, including providing intervention services, establishing training programs to reduce HIB or enhance school climate, imposing discipline, and/or ordering counseling.

The results of the investigation and action taken or recommended by the superintendent must be reported to the Board of Education no later than its next meeting following the completion of the investigation.

Information about the investigation must be provided to parents/guardians of students who are parties to the investigation. This report must be in writing within five (5) school days after reporting the results to the Board of Education and must include the nature of the investigation, whether the District found evidence of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, whether discipline was imposed or if services were provided to address the harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying. A parent/guardian may request a hearing before the Board of Education after receiving the information. The Board of Education hearing must be held within ten (10) days of the parental request. The hearing is to be conducted during executive session to protect confidentiality. The school anti-bullying specialist may testify about the incident, recommendations for discipline or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such incidents.

The Board of Education must issue, at its next meeting following the receipt of the report, a written decision affirming, rejecting, or modifying the superintendent's decision. The parent/guardian may appeal the Board's decision to the Commissioner of Education within 90 days of issuance of the board's decision.

Please refer to [Policy and Regulation 5512](#) Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying, which is available on the Board website, for further clarification.

## **CYBER-BULLYING**

### **Definition:**

1. Verbal harassment that occurs during online activities.
2. Use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not limited to, email messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, social networks, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:
  - a. Deliberately threatens, harasses, or intimidates an individual or group of individuals; or
  - b. Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual's property; or
  - c. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

### **Examples:**

1. Threatening email;
2. Derogatory postings on social networks
3. Harassing instant/direct messaging (IM's/DM's);
4. Repeated texts sent to the cell phone;
5. A website set up to mock others;
6. "Borrowing" someone's screen name and pretending to be that person while posting a message; and
7. Forwarding supposedly private messages, pictures, or video

### **Investigation of Reports of Violence/Complaints:**

1. Any pupil or school staff member who believes he/she has been or is being subjected to cyber-bullying, as well as any person who knows of such conduct, shall immediately make a report to the building Principal or designee.
2. The building Principal or designee shall investigate all reports of such conduct.
3. If the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was not committed, the building Principal or designee will inform the affected parties of the investigation results.
4. If the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was committed by a School District pupil on school grounds and/or using School District technologies, the pupil will be subjected to appropriate discipline.
5. In the event the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was committed by a School District pupil using non-school District technologies away from school grounds, the building Principal or designee may report the investigation results to local law enforcement.

### **Discipline and Consequences:**

1. Some acts of cyber-bullying may be isolated incidents requiring the School District to respond appropriately to the individual committing the acts.
2. However, other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of cyber-bullying that require a response either at the classroom, school building, or School District level or by law enforcement officials.
3. Reprisal or retaliation against any staff member or pupil who reports an act of cyber-bullying is prohibited. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the building Principal or designee after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act in accordance with case law, Federal and State statutes and regulations, and District policies and procedures.



## **RESPECT IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY POLICIES**

### **1. STAFF MEMBER ROLE**

- a. Staff members (teaching and support staff members, bus aides, paraprofessionals, secretaries, central office staff, building and grounds personnel, food service personnel, technology staff, and community education staff and providers) and pupils should have a relationship that is based on cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect.
- b. As the authority figure and role model within the classroom and school community, the staff member is expected to exercise good judgment when interacting with pupils.
- c. Staff members entrusted with the care and custody of pupils and/or working in the school environment, must ensure that their interactions with pupils remain clearly within the confines of a professional and appropriate relationship.
- d. Teaching staff members have a responsibility to provide an orderly learning environment that:
  - i. Enables the pupil to develop an open and inquiring mind; and
  - ii. Motivates each pupil to perform to his/her potential.
- e. The role of the staff member is that of a resource person, mentor, or guide through the educational process.

### **2. INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS**

- a. Staff members are encouraged to take an interest in each individual pupil; such interest must remain professional and appropriate.
- b. Partiality must be avoided and professional ethics must be considered at all times.
- c. Excessive informal and social involvement with individual pupils gives rise to charges of partiality.
- d. Staff members shall refrain from using insults and sarcasm when addressing pupils as a way of forcing compliance.
- e. Interactions between staff and pupils that go beyond the appropriate staff member/pupil relationship may include, but are not limited to:
  - Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with pupils or any other conduct that might be considered sexual harassment under the Board's policies on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of pupils (kissing; wrestling/roughhousing with a pupil; hugs, pats, and hand-holding; permitting a pupil to sit on one's lap; asking for or giving pupils a massage; or stroking a pupil's hair);
  - Phone calls, letters, tapes, or other communications of a sexual or personal nature;
  - Inappropriate electronic communications not related to school, including but not limited to, email messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, Internet blogs, Internet chat rooms, Internet posting and websites, and social networks (such as Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram);
  - Allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in obscene, pornographic, or suggestive discussion, display or photography;
  - Singling out a particular pupil or pupils for personal attention and friendship beyond the normal staff/pupil relationship;
  - Asking for a date, or dating between staff and pupil;
  - Comments about a pupil's dating partner or potential dating partner;
  - Situations of unequal power between staff members and pupils (employing pupil, babysitting, odd jobs, tutoring, etc.);
  - Confiding in a pupil about teachers' family, personal and/or work issues; and
  - Threatening behavior.

### 3. INTERACTIONS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- a. The Board emphasizes calm and respectful learning environments.
- b. No parent, guardian or family member may be disrespectful to school staff.
- c. Vulgarity and threats are strictly forbidden and engaging in such conduct will require the individual to leave the premises or be charged with trespassing.

### 4. STUDENT RESPECT OF STAFF MEMBERS

- a. Students must treat all staff with respect and courtesy.
- b. Students should not violate the rights of staff or interfere with staff members' efforts in performing their jobs.

### 5. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIONS

- a. The Principal will notify the affirmative action officer of all reported instances involving inappropriate staff/pupil relations.
- b. The affirmative action officer or designee will investigate all reported violations (except those involving criminal sexual contact or sexual assault which must be immediately reported to law enforcement for investigation) and will submit a final report to the superintendent of schools.
- c. The affirmative action officer or designee, upon reviewing an initial report, or the superintendent, upon reviewing the investigation report, may take such appropriate action as necessary or as provided for by law.
  - i. This may include, *but is not limited to*, notifying the law enforcement and/or the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP), formerly known as the Division of Youth and Family Services.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

You are entitled to review your child's student records and to challenge its contents. Student records include information related to an individual student gathered within or outside of the School District and maintained within the school system, regardless of the physical form in which it is maintained. The District may deny access to parents/legal guardians/adult students only upon court order. The parent/legal guardian/adult student may appeal such a denial.

The parent of a special education student, the adult student, or their designated representative shall be permitted to inspect and review the contents of the student's records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding the student's IEP. Any parent/guardian/adult student may request the right to inspect the student's file by submitting a letter to the superintendent. Such requests will be granted within ten (10) days after receipt of said letter. A reasonable fee may be charged for copies of the records requested.

"Student directory information" can be released to the public without consent. This information includes a student's name, grade level, date and place of birth, dates of school attendance, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities, weight and height relating to athletic team membership, degrees, awards, most recent school attended, and other similar information. **The parent/guardian/adult student can submit a written statement to the superintendent to prohibit the disclosure of such information within ten (10) days of receipt of this handbook.**

The District also compiles a school contact directory for official use. This directory contains a student's name, address, telephone number, date of birth, and school of enrollment. It is provided only to judicial and law enforcement personnel for official use, and to medical personnel who are currently providing services to the student. If the parent/guardian/adult student wants to exclude such information from this directory, the parent/guardian/adult student must notify the District in writing within 10 days of receipt of this handbook.

When the parent's dominant language is not English, the District will make every effort to provide the interpretation of the student record in the dominant language of the parent or assist parents in securing an interpreter.

Students involved in school-based substance abuse programs are entitled to confidentiality. If staff learns of illegal activity from a source different from the student's substance abuse program, staff must report such information to law

enforcement.

Upon graduation or permanent departure of a student from the school system, the parent/guardian/adult student may request a copy of the entire student record.

Collection, maintenance, and access to student records shall be conducted in accordance with the laws and Board Policy 8330.

## **STUDENT SURVEYS**

The District will seek parental/guardian consent under the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and N.J.S.A. 18A:36-34 when administering surveys to students.

## **REPORTS TO THE DIVISION OF CHILD PROTECTION & PERMANENCY (formerly DYFS)**

All School District personnel, including teaching staff members, support staff members, and volunteers, are charged by law with the responsibility for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DCPP. The suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect may be based on the complaints of the child or on direct observations. If child abuse and/or neglect are suspected, the matter will be reported to DCPP immediately. The Principal or his/her designee must then make a report to local law enforcement.

Any person having reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must immediately report to DCPP, Institutional Abuse Unit at (877) 652-2873.

## **NOTICE REGARDING HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**

Notice of any construction or other activities involving the use of any hazardous substances will be posted on a bulletin board in the school. Hazardous substances may be stored at the school at various times throughout the year. A hazardous substance fact sheet for any such substance used or stored is available in the Main Office.

## **HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS**

As a parent/guardian of a student at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers; specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information:

- Whether the New Jersey State Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the New Jersey State Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being fully licensed or qualified under State regulations because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
- Whether any teachers' aides or similar paraprofessionals provided services to your child, and what qualifications they have

Please be assured that the Teaneck Public School District has an extensive recruitment and screening process to ensure that each classroom teacher hired not only holds appropriate NJ certification but also possesses a high level of competence and potential for growth, essential qualities for a successful teaching and educational experience. To request such information, please contact the Principal's office at (201) 833-5470.

## **DISTRICT-PROVIDED ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES**

Teaneck is very fortunate to be able to provide our students with activities and projects that involve the use of the Internet. We believe that the Internet offers vast, diverse, and invaluable resources to our students. The District's goal in providing this access is to promote academic growth and excellence in our schools. With the potential of Internet use come responsibilities and rights for that use. Students and staff are responsible for acceptable behavior on school computer systems just as they are in a classroom or hallway. Policy, regulations, and procedures for behavior, discipline, and the use of district-provided technology apply.

Outside of school, families bear responsibility for the same guidance of Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, radio, movies, and other potentially offensive media.

The District's Policy and Regulations entitled District-Provided Access to Electronic Information contain restrictions on accessing inappropriate material. Parents need to be aware that the Internet is an open system containing material that may be deemed objectionable. The information may be defamatory, offensive, pornographic, controversial, discriminatory, or otherwise inappropriate. While the District will use software designed to prohibit access to sites, which are inappropriate and will assist students in learning to make appropriate choices, it cannot guarantee that such information will not be accessed by students. The District is not responsible for the content, quality, or accuracy of any information accessed or transmitted through the Internet. By signing the District's Parent/Guardian Consent and Release form, Parents/Guardians acknowledge that the Board of Education, its officers, employees, agents, and representatives are not responsible for any damages that may occur related to the use or misuse of the district's computer network system and the Internet. The Board is not responsible for any inappropriate usage by students. Every student is responsible for his/her own conduct. In order to have access to District computers and the internet while at school, you must complete the Electronic Information Access form and return it to the main office. Your child will not have access to District computers or the Internet until the form is returned. If you have any questions regarding the policy and regulations, please contact the Principal's office at (201) 833-5470. **Please review these policies with your daughter and/or son.**

## **FIELD TRIPS**

The Board of Education recognizes that field trips (curriculum-related field trips and enrichment-related field trips), properly planned and integrated with the curriculum, are an educationally sound and important part of the program of the schools that can supplement and enrich classroom instruction by providing learning experiences in an environment outside the schools.

All overnight and/or Out-of-State field trips must be approved, in advance, by the Board of Education. The Board of Education will only consider for approval those trips which have been submitted by the Superintendent for Board approval.

For purposes of this policy, a field trip means any journey by a group of pupils away from the school premises, under the supervision of a teacher, which is an integral part of an approved course of study and conducted for the purpose of affording a first-hand educational experience not available in the classroom.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for preliminarily approving all proposed field trips. The Superintendent will review such trips and submit to the Board for approval those trips which he or she recommends for Board approval. Pupils with financial hardship will be exempted from contributing when all or part of the costs of an enrichment-related trip is borne by parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The determination of a pupil's inability to pay will be based upon the pupil's eligibility for free and reduced meals in accordance with Board Policy.

When field trips are arranged, the following minimum guidelines apply:

- A. All field trips and related transportation arrangements must have advance approval. This includes use of vehicles, the route, and other transportation arrangements, such as specially-equipped buses/vans.
- B. All costs must be ascertained well in advance of submission for approval.

- C. Each pupil who goes on the field trip must have written permission from a parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
- D. Pupil safety must be of prime concern and adequate supervision must be provided by staff aided by other adult chaperones, if necessary.
- E. Times and locations of field trips shall not be posted on any District websites.
- F. All field trips must be well-planned and properly timed so as to minimize disruption of instruction.
- G. When planning the field trip, and again two school days prior to the departure, the teacher planning the field trip must contact the appropriate State and/or Federal agency/department to determine the existence of any safety issues at the trip site. Trips out of the United States require consultation with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consumer Affairs. In addition, contact should be made with local law enforcement having jurisdiction at the trip site to identify potential safety issues there, or en route.
- H. Field trip activity time should not be disproportionate to transportation and/or meal time.
- I. An appropriate number of chaperones must participate in a given field trip to ensure pupil safety and well-being.
- J. The administration must review this policy and corresponding regulation annually and report to the Board on their effectiveness.

Participation in a field trip is a privilege. A pupil who demonstrates disregard for school rules may summarily be denied participation in field trips. Pupils on field trips remain under the supervision of this Board and are subject to its rules and regulations. A pupil who violates rules or disregards the authority of supervisors on a field trip, may be summarily dismissed from the trip. A pupil who possesses or consumes alcohol or drugs in the course of an approved field trip places all other participating pupils at risk and shall be immediately dismissed from the trip.

Any such pupil referenced in this paragraph may be returned home by appropriate and safe means of transportation in the company of a chaperone, the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), or a representative of the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Any expenses incurred by the dismissal will be the responsibility of the pupil and/or the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The teaching staff member in charge will make arrangements for the dismissed pupil's transportation home or to school, as appropriate. The cost of any such transportation will be borne by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the pupil. The Board reserves the right to take further disciplinary measures in accordance with Board Policy.

The Board shall permit self-administration of medication on field trips for asthma or other potentially life-threatening illness, in accordance with Board Policy. Epinephrine shall be administered via epi-pen to pupils in emergencies on trips by the school nurse, his/her designee, the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), or the pupil himself/herself, in accordance with Board Policy.

The Board reserves the right to cancel any field trip if the Board determines that circumstances are such that it cannot foresee a reasonably safe travel environment, or for any other reason.

The Superintendent shall prepare regulations pertaining to field trips that ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils shall be protected at all times; that parental permission is obtained before any pupil may be removed from the school for a field trip; that each field trip is properly planned, integrated with the curriculum, and followed-up by appropriate activities that enhance its usefulness; that the effectiveness of field trip activities is monitored and continually evaluated; that teachers are allowed a considerable degree of flexibility and innovation in planning field trips; that no field trip is approved unless it contributes to the achievement of specified instructional objectives; and that teachers are not permitted to make on-site alterations to a trip itinerary, except where the health, safety or welfare of pupils is imperiled or where changes or substitutions beyond the control of the teacher have frustrated the purpose of the trip.

The Board assumes no liability for any field trip which is not approved by the Board. The Board does not endorse, support, or assume liability in any way for any staff member who takes pupils on trips not approved by the Board.

The Superintendent shall, prior to June 30, annually prepare a list of all field trips that occurred during that school year.

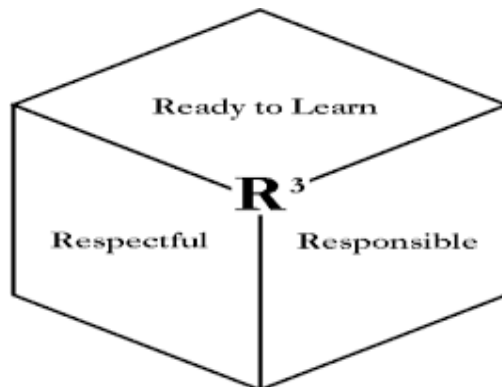
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-21 et seq.; 18A:53-2

Adopted:

***Thomas Jefferson  
Middle School***

***2023-2024***

***Student Code of Conduct***



# Thomas Jefferson Middle School

## **Student Code of Conduct and School-wide Discipline Policy**

[Please click on the link below to view the complete Code of Conduct \(Policy 5600\).  
TBOE Code of Conduct \(policy 5600\)](#)

*This handbook is designed to help students meet their goals. The procedures contained within are to help students adjust to our school and to become successful. The expectations are in effect whether a student is in school, visiting another school within the District, before, during, or after school and for all school-sponsored activities. This handbook is designed in conjunction with District policy, state and federal law. **PLEASE KEEP THIS STUDENT HANDBOOK AND CODE OF CONDUCT HANDY FOR REFERENCE DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.***

### **PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE**

The staff members of the Teaneck Middle Schools attempt to provide each individual student with opportunities to mature intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, ethically, and physically. We believe that each individual student can grow within this spectrum when encouraged to identify and develop his or her unique attitudes, abilities, and interests. We strive to provide a positive multicultural learning environment characterized by an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect for the personal worth and dignity of each individual.

In a democratic society, each individual must learn to work effectively with others and share the privileges and responsibilities of good citizenship. The development of self-discipline and the acceptance of individual responsibility are important goals of education.

An effective school discipline code is directly related to the excellence of the total educational program and the development of mutual respect. Individuals who are motivated to do their best and who possess a sense of responsibility for their own actions are an inspiration to others. The Teaneck Middle School community strives to provide an atmosphere of purpose and to convey concern for the education and well-being of every individual in the school.

The goals of the student code of conduct are:

- Development of self-discipline by clearly communicating to students their rights and responsibilities as outlined in the discipline code;
- Protection of the rights of all staff and students by providing a discipline code that establishes rules and regulations prohibiting conduct that is disruptive or otherwise harmful to the work of the school and students;
- Protection of the rights of each individual by ensuring fair and reasonable consequences for treatment of infractions through a progressive discipline policy;
- Respect for the rights and personal dignity of all students and staff through the provision of a discipline code that will ensure a safe school environment;
- Compliance with federal, State, and local laws;
- Protection and maintenance of school property;
- Reduction of the occurrence of discipline problems using support services and referral to appropriate personnel for counseling, examination, and such other rehabilitative measures as may be necessary.

## **GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT**

All students have the responsibility to maintain their own good conduct. Rules of conduct respect the rights of students but also require students to respect the rights of others.

- Every student is expected to follow the directives of administrators, teachers, and other staff.
- Every student is expected to be respectful of others, both adults and peers.
- Every student is expected to display behavior that contributes positively to the overall atmosphere of the school.
- Every student is expected to adhere to guidelines/regulations concerning substance abuse.
- Every student is expected to wear safe and non-distracting clothing. Discretion should be exercised when choosing apparel to be worn to school.

## **Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

It is the ultimate goal of Thomas Jefferson Middle School to provide an environment that is conducive to learning. A staff that provides guidance, a friendly atmosphere, and is committed to a philosophy regarding the rights, procedures, and responsibilities of the students will achieve this. All staff have an obligation to set fair and reasonable standards of behavior for students, and to take the necessary steps to maintain these standards.

The Thomas Jefferson Middle School code of conduct consists of reasonable rules based upon respect to produce a positive learning environment. These rules will be thoroughly emphasized and consistently enforced. All stakeholders are responsible for good discipline.

## **Responsibilities of Students**

To achieve academic and social success, the students of Thomas Jefferson Middle School should familiarize themselves with the following responsibilities:

- Always do your best
- Be respectful of property, others, and yourself, at all times
- Accept full responsibility for your behavior and actions
- Be prepared for class, seek help when needed and be responsible for making up all missed work and tests
- Make the best use of time and contribute positively to class, group and school activities

## **Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians**

- Be the primary advocate for your child's education
- Encourage attendance at school and prompt arrival
- Support the goals of Thomas Jefferson Middle School as stated in the student handbook
- Be supportive of the school's decisions when they affect your child
- Play an active role in promoting your child's learning experience and positive behavior

## **Responsibilities of Administrators**

- Effectively communicate school goals to students, staff, parents and the community
- Promote a school climate that positively engages and encourages productive relationships among and between students, staff, parents/guardians, and the community
- Create and maintain a safe learning environment

## **Responsibilities of Staff**

- Treat each other, students, parents/guardians, and the community with dignity and respect
- Support and maintain a positive school climate and school goals



- Actively monitor behavior in the classroom, hallways, cafeteria, etc.
- Hold all students to high expectations

### **Parents/Guardians and Students:**

All students are expected to behave appropriately in accordance with general rules of good conduct, Board policy and regulations. The administration will consider each case individually and administer appropriate discipline in accordance with Board policy. Drugs, alcohol, and weapons are never permitted at school, on a school bus, or at school-sponsored functions. “Weapons” includes knives, guns of any sort (including “toy or other imitation,” pellet and B-B guns), slingshots, chains, box cutters, or anything that can be used to inflict serious bodily injury.

### **Attendance**

- ❑ Both parents/guardians and school officials have an obligation to see that students of school age actually attend school. The compulsory education laws of New Jersey hold **parents/guardians** responsible for regular attendance for their children who are between the ages of six and sixteen. Regular attendance at school is a fundamental prerequisite to enable students to benefit from the provision of free education.
- ❑ Students are expected to attend *all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the District*. You may request an excused absence only for the following reasons:
  - Personal illness of 5 or more days (student must report to nurse’s office upon return with a doctor’s note preferably accompanied by a parent)
  - Approved religious holidays
  - Death in the immediate family
  - Court-ordered appearance
  - Suspensions from school
  - Authorized school field trips and athletic events
  - As set forth in the student’s IEP, Section 504 Plan, or individual health care plan, where appropriate
  - Official appointments with Assistant Principals, Guidance Counselors, or medical staff
- ❑ You are asked not to take students out of school for vacations or nonessential activities. Call (201) 833-5475 to report your child’s absence. Students cannot call the school themselves.

*If your child is absent for all or part of a day, you are required to present a note or provide a doctor’s certificate to the Attendance Secretary within three (3) days of return from the absence. The note or doctor’s certificate has to say why your child was absent. This note is required even if you have called the school to report that your child will be absent. Credit is not given for assignments missed during unexcused absences.*

**Board of Education policy specifically outlines penalties, up to and including retention, for students with excessive absences, i.e., more than eighteen (18) days of unexcused absences.**

**A student who has 10 or more cumulative unexcused absences will be considered truant, referred to a court program as required by State law, and will be subject to proceedings under the compulsory attendance laws.**

### **Tardiness**

- ❑ NJSA Statute 18A:38-25 states, “*Every parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of children between the ages of six and 16 years shall cause such child to regularly attend public schools...*”
- ❑ In addition: NJSA 18A:38-31 states, “*A parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of children between the ages of six and 16 years who shall fail to comply with any of the provisions of this article relating to his duties, shall be deemed to be a disorderly person and shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$25.00 for a first offense and not more than \$100.00 for each subsequent offense, in the discretion of the court. In any such proceeding, the summons issued therein, or in special circumstances of a warrant, shall be directed to the alleged disorderly person and the child.*”

- ❑ Simply stated, your child must be in school on time each day. Parents/guardians should note that accompanying their children to school does not excuse them from being late.
- ❑ **Understanding that emergencies occur, three (3) unexcused tardies are permitted per semester (marking periods 1 and 2 combined, and marking periods 3 and 4 combined) before a consequence is enforced. Beginning with the fourth (4th) unexcused tardy and each one thereafter in a semester, an afterschool detention will be assigned.**

### **Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices, including but not limited to radios, tablets, iPads, cameras, laser pointers, CD/DVD players, electronic gaming devices and systems, etc. are **not permitted in school unless specifically requested by staff for classroom use.** They create a distraction to the learning environment.

### **Cell Phones, Wireless Headphones, or Smart Watches**

A student may possess a cellular phone, but it must be kept in his/her locker during school hours. The use of cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, cafeteria, locker rooms, or during recess is **prohibited.** Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off while the student is in the school building and may be turned on after school has concluded for the day and outside of the school building. They shall not be openly displayed and must be stored in the locker, or on their person completely out of sight. Any electronic device THAT IS VISIBLE will be confiscated. **No investigation will be undertaken to locate a lost or stolen phone. The school will not assume responsibility for the theft, damage, or loss of cell phones, wireless headphones, or Smart Watches.**

### **Personal Learning Devices**

Thomas Jefferson Middle School is committed to using technology to foster a meaningful educational experience for all students. The Personal Learning Device initiative at Thomas Jefferson Middle School is intended to offer students the privilege of utilizing technology to find relevance in their learning and enhance real-world skills that prepare them for college and career readiness. Therefore, it is expected that students maintain a standard of excellence in the area of responsibility and self-discipline as they use the computers or travel through the school building with their devices. **Any student who misuses his/her technology privilege will be held accountable in accordance with the Thomas Jefferson Middle School code of conduct.**

### **Dress Code**

The Thomas Jefferson Middle School faculty and staff recognize that the media and pop culture has a great influence on young people in the area of fashion and style. Unfortunately, some of those trends and styles have become increasingly more provocative and not conducive to a serious learning environment. The administration is asking parents/guardians to provide the support and primary oversight needed to ensure that their child is wearing appropriate attire to school. We expect students to dress properly for school. Clothing should be neat and clean. Messages or pictures on T-shirts should not be offensive or inappropriate. Attire should not be sexually provocative.

The following is an outline of the most common dress code issues, and should serve as a guide for students and parents:

- ❑ Bare midriffs or belly shirts are not permissible.
- ❑ Pants must be worn at the waist, not allowing undergarments to be visible
- ❑ Leggings/tights are not permissible with any combination of clothing.
- ❑ Attire with indecent humor, slogans, or images is not permissible
- ❑ Jeans and shorts with holes or tears (of any size) above the thigh are not permissible
- ❑ Skirt and short lengths must allow for modesty while standing or sitting (mid-thigh or longer)
- ❑ Necklines must **not** be low on dresses or tops

- ❑ Halter tops/dresses and tops/dresses with spaghetti straps are not permissible.
- ❑ Tube tops, off-the-shoulder tops, or tops with only one arm are not permissible.
- ❑ Tank-top& athletic shirts, unless a T-shirt is worn underneath, are not permissible.
- ❑ Hats, caps, bandannas, or sweatbands may **not** be worn in the building, except as approved by the Principal. Head coverings that are not worn to meet religious requirements are not permitted. All head coverings are to be stored in lockers only. Students are not permitted to carry hats unless students are on their way outdoors for physical education, recess, or dismissal.
- ❑ Pajama bottoms are not permissible. Pajama bottoms are **not** appropriate dress for physical education or school.
- ❑ Winter coats are not to be worn inside. Students are encouraged to wear layers during the cooler months.
- ❑ Coats must be stored in student lockers unless students are on their way outdoors for physical education, recess, or dismissal.
- ❑ Hoods may not be worn inside the building.
- ❑ Slides/flip-flops, sandals, and Crocs without secure backs are not permissible due to safety reasons.
- ❑ Only 5th-grade students may wear backpacks throughout the school day.

***The dress code will be strictly enforced. Students who violate the dress code will receive either a warning, or detention, and, in some cases, will be removed from classes until the parent or guardian brings proper attire from home.***

### **Positive Behavior In Schools (P.B.I.S.)**

The Positive Behavior in Schools ([PBIS](#)) Program is a process that uses current research and validated practices in positive behavior support. This program encourages and supports pro-social student behavior at the school-wide, classroom, and individual student levels. Please visit our [PBIS](#) website for more information.

The school-wide “[PBIS](#)” primary goal is to create safer and more effective schools by structuring the learning environment to support the academic and social success of **all** students. The goals of [PBIS](#) are to prevent the development of inappropriate behavior, reduce ongoing patterns of problem behavior, and to increase the likelihood of improved academic performance of **all** students through the teaching and learning time gained when the numbers of inappropriate behaviors are reduced in the school and classroom. We focus on encouraging positive student behavior, preventing disruptive behavior and tailoring academic strategies to individual student’s needs.

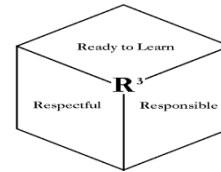
Positive discipline is an essential aspect of our code and we believe it is safe, natural, holistic, and humanistic. This method is to treat the child with respect. It is treating the child as if he/she is as important a human being as you are. It is treating him/her with the same respect with which you wish for him/her to treat others, you, and themselves.

Positive discipline is an essential aspect of Thomas Jefferson Middle School and its discipline policy is based on the following principles:

- The school will be oriented toward success. The emphasis is to provide all students with support and opportunities to experience success in learning contexts.
- Positive feedback to students, in most instances, is more effective in the management of behavior than negative feedback. It is important to acknowledge when students are doing the right thing.
- Discipline is a process for helping students learn and gain skills of self-discipline.
- Discipline is administered fairly and consistently throughout the school; it will occur in a manner that acknowledges age and cultural differences.

- The school will develop a partnership between staff, students and their families in order to establish expectations and contingencies related to acceptable student behavior.

We can be **Thomas Jefferson Middle School Patriots** by...



- respecting people's personal space & property.
- being mindful of our topics of conversation.
- practicing responsibility within our classrooms.
- always striving to be the best version of ourselves.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>School Wide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have your student planner/passbook at all times</li> <li>• Address one another respectfully</li> <li>• Be prepared and on time</li> <li>• Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself</li> <li>• Wear appropriate school attire</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Arrival &amp; Dismissal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrive on time by 8:20 am and use the entrance for your grade level</li> <li>• Place hats, outerwear, backpacks and personal electronic devices in your locker</li> <li>• Be respectful of neighboring homes &amp; properties</li> <li>• Leave school grounds in a timely manner</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Classrooms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindness counts</li> <li>• Be attentive and follow directions</li> <li>• Address one another respectfully</li> <li>• Be prepared and on time</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hallways/Stairwells</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk, don't run, use a quiet inside voice and keep to the right</li> <li>• Keep hands, feet and all objects to yourself</li> <li>• Keep hallways and stairwells clean</li> <li>• Move directly to your next class</li> <li>• Use lockers during designated times</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bathrooms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a pass</li> <li>• Respect the privacy of others</li> <li>• Keep area graffiti free</li> <li>• Clean up after yourself</li> <li>• Wash and dry hands</li> <li>• Keep the restrooms clean</li> <li>• Return to class immediately</li> <li>• Report any problems to an adult</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Digital Citizenship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use care when handling school issued learning devices</li> <li>• Only visit appropriate and approved sites</li> <li>• Keep personal information private</li> <li>• Report unsafe situations</li> <li>• Remember what you post lasts forever</li> <li>• Charge your school issued learning device for the next school day</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Media Center</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a pass and sign in</li> <li>• Use a quiet inside voice</li> <li>• Treat library books, equipment and furniture with care</li> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> <li>• Clean up after yourself</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Health Office</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a pass</li> <li>• Wait your turn</li> <li>• Use a quiet inside voice</li> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> <li>• Health related phone calls to parents/guardians will only be made by the nurse</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cafeteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be patient in line</li> <li>• Clean up after yourself</li> <li>• Keep hands, feet and all objects to yourself</li> <li>• Use good manners (Please and Thank you)</li> <li>• Enter/exit quietly through designated doors</li> <li>• Keep the cafeteria clean</li> <li>• Be attentive, listen to directions and follow cafeteria guidelines</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gymnasium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have proper clothing</li> <li>• Listen and follow adult directions</li> <li>• Keep your hands and feet to yourself</li> <li>• Ask for permission to leave the gym</li> <li>• Adult supervision is required to enter the gym</li> <li>• Demonstrate good sportsmanship</li> <li>• Respect others' belongings</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Auditorium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> <li>• Respect performances and respond positively</li> <li>• Stay seated in your designated area</li> <li>• Be attentive and sit quietly during the performance</li> <li>• Appreciate other people's talents</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Offices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a pass</li> <li>• Use a quiet inside voice</li> <li>• Use kind, helpful and appropriate words</li> <li>• Ask permission before using the phone</li> </ul>

## **Strategies to Increase Student Responsibility**

We believe that one of the central missions of the school should be to cultivate responsibility in students. The term responsibility captures the essence of self-discipline. For our purposes, responsibility encompasses the student's capacity and desire to behave properly without direct supervision, modify one's own behavior when it is improper, and assist others in behaving properly.

While students may possess the potential to behave properly without direct supervision, there is no guarantee that they will actually behave properly all the time. We are human and imperfect. The school's goal is to help students become better decision-makers.

We have identified some strategies to help the student increase their capacity to become responsible for their actions as well as making better decisions to their behavior. Some approaches and/or skills students can develop with the help of the school community are self-monitoring; goal setting; self-talk; communication skills; social skills; study skills; group skills; decision-making skills; and conflict-resolution skills. Our goal is that through these skills students will be able to evaluate their behavior; reflect on alternative ways to foster responsibility and to point beyond themselves to community and civic engagement.

## **Responsible Behavior**

Responsible students carefully weigh the possible results of their behavior before acting. You have been given a copy of the new Code of Conduct, and your teachers have reviewed it with you. If you decide to behave responsibly and to live by the Code, your daily experiences in TJMS will be largely positive.

Your personal philosophy should include the following statements:

- I am the one and only person who has the power to decide what I will be and do.
- I am responsible for my actions and the decisions I make.
- I am in charge of my learning and behavior.
- I will respect the rights of others, and be a credit to my school, my family, my community and myself.

## **Resolving Conflict Peacefully**

- ❑ Conflict of one sort or another is something faced by everyone.
- ❑ We expect students to resolve all conflicts peacefully. **Violence is not an option.**
- ❑ Peer Mediation is designed to help students reflectively process and solve problems by peaceful means. Staff members and specially trained students are available to help you solve problems. They will help you to learn to listen better, to see and understand others' points of view as well as your own, to "read" and to respond to situations more skillfully and creatively.

## **Exemplary Citizenship**

The staff members of the Teaneck Middle Schools look forward to recognizing students who demonstrate exemplary citizenship: perfect attendance; service to others; and regular acts of kindness.

## **Respect in the School Community**

### ***Student Responsibilities:***

Students have the responsibility to treat all staff members, including but not limited to teachers, paraprofessionals, providers, secretarial staff, and custodians, with respect and courtesy. Each student is urged to regard staff members as resources who can be utilized to advance the student's own knowledge and development. Students are required to respect the rights of staff members and interference with such rights will not be permitted. No student will be permitted to interfere with the efforts of staff members in the performance of their jobs. Students should listen to and follow all directions of staff members. They should take care of school materials and school property and demonstrate positive social skills. Students have a responsibility to be prepared for school, both with all needed materials and work and a positive attitude towards learning.

Students also have the responsibility to treat other students with respect and courtesy. Students should choose peer groups that demonstrate safe, respectful and responsible behavior. Students should resolve conflicts in a positive manner; violence is not an option. Students should listen to their peers and be open to new and different ideas and viewpoints.

Students also have the responsibility to treat visitors to the school community, including parents, volunteers, vendors, students from other schools, and fans, with respect and courtesy. Students are representatives of this District and should represent the District in an exemplary manner. Students shall exhibit goodwill and courtesy towards all individuals with whom they come in contact.

### ***Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:***

Staff members are expected to work collaboratively with parents/guardians to best meet each student's needs. Staff members should listen to, and show respect towards, all parents/guardians. Parent/guardian involvement is encouraged and welcomed. Open and courteous communication is the key to a successful relationship between staff members and parents/guardians.

While the District encourages all parents/guardians to participate in their child's education to the fullest extent, it is important to remember that staff members are professionals, and parents/guardians should not interfere with staff members' efforts and actions to perform their job obligations.

The District emphasizes the importance of calm and respectful learning environments. To that end, no parent, family member, family friend, or volunteer may be disrespectful to school staff. Vulgarity and threats are strictly forbidden. Such conduct will result in a demand to leave the premises at the risk of a trespass charge.

## **Behavior at Athletic Events**

The District expects that all students, parents/guardians, family members, and friends who attend athletic events behave in a respectful and courteous manner. The District reserves the right to ban the presence of any individual from an athletic event who: (1) engages in verbal or physical threats or abuse aimed at any student, coach, official, or parent/guardian at an athletic event; or (2) who initiates a fight or scuffle with any student, coach, official, parent/guardian, or other person at an athletic event.

## **Discipline Code**

The goals of the Teaneck Middle Schools' Discipline Code are the protection of the rights of all staff and students, the development of self-discipline, the protection of school property and the provision of appropriate support to anyone who has difficulty following the Code. The Code specifies general responsibilities of students, parents/guardians and staff; it lists examples of behaviors, which are considered misconduct; and it also lists possible consequences, which are used when misconduct occurs.

In addition to the District-wide Code, we have developed our own school-behavior plan. This plan includes activities for teaching and encouraging expected behaviors. We communicate this school-behavior plan with our parents/guardians and students. We also include strategies for teaching and reinforcing behavior, and strategies for providing consequences for both positive and negative behavior.

Discipline means: "To teach and train." As a community, we must acquire skills that will accomplish the goal we set for ourselves: to provide a safe, secure and enjoyable school where all individuals, students and adults alike, are respected and responsible for their own actions and behavior.

## **Administrative Action**

If a student engages in any misconduct, the following administrative actions may be taken, separately or in any combination: conference with student, teacher, counselor, and/or administrator; parent conference with student, teacher, counselor, and/or administrator; detention before or after school, or at recess, or a combination of these; assignment of a special project; assignment of community service; in-school suspension; out-of-school suspension; expulsion (the denial of the student's right to attend public school, which may be imposed only by the Board of Education).

Specific sanctions, such as denying students the privilege of participating in [extracurricular](#) activities, restricting students to attending field trips only when accompanied by a parent or guardian, or exclusion from participation in promotion ceremonies and celebrations may be imposed if appropriate.

The District has a right to impose a consequence on a student for conduct away from school grounds, including on a school bus or at a school sponsored function, when it is reasonably necessary for the student's physical or emotional safety, security, or well-being or for reasons related to the safety, security, and well-being of other students, staff, or school property. This authority will be exercised when the student's conduct materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school.

## **Detention**

Students who do not follow the rules of the school may be detained after school. A teacher may detain a student for a period of time in the classroom, and the Principal or Assistant Principals may assign a student to after-school detention in a central location. Detention for the fifth grade is held from Tuesday to Thursday from 3:00 p.m. until 3:15 p.m. For sixth, seventh, and eighth graders it is held Tuesday to Thursday from 3:15 p.m. until 3:45 p.m.

For some infractions or patterns of behavior, 5th-grade students may be required to come for lunch/recess detention. Lunch/recess detention is held in the in-school suspension room during their lunch period.

## **Suspension**

If a student's behavior warrants suspension from school activities due to its seriousness or frequency, the student and the parents or guardians will be given the reasons for the suspension in person (if possible) and in a letter. Before imposing suspension, the student will be told what he/she is accused of and what the accusation is based upon, and the student will have the opportunity to respond to the charge. Reasons for suspension include but are not limited to, fighting, possession of drugs or alcohol, acts of vandalism, destruction or theft of property, disrespect for school staff members, smoking, and the possession of weapons or explosives. The length of the suspension will be determined by the seriousness and frequency of the behavior. Parents/guardians will be notified at the time of the suspension, and a parent conference will be arranged. Suspensions will be documented by letter.

## **Expulsion**

The District must provide educational services/programs for an expelled student until the student graduates from high school or reaches the age of 20 unless the student has waived his rights to a free public education. An expulsion of a student with a disability must be handled in accordance with State and federal regulations, along with District policy and procedures.

## **Reasons for Suspension or Expulsion**

New Jersey law provides guidance with regard to the reasons for which a student may be suspended or expelled from school. A student may be suspended or expelled for good cause that shall include, but is not limited to:

- Continued and willful disobedience, or defiance of authority;
- Conduct, determined by the Principal, which constitutes a continuing danger to the physical well-being of other students;
- The habitual use of profanity or obscene language;
- Vandalism of school property;
- The physical assault, robbery, or attempted robbery of other students or staff;
- Participation in or inciting demonstrations involving the unauthorized occupancy of school buildings;
- Inciting truancy by other students;
- Possession of a weapon;
- The illegal possession, consumption, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances on school property, school bus, or at any school function;
- Other behaviors that are deemed inappropriate by administration or staff.

## **Suspension and Expulsion**

When a student is suspended, the student may not participate in the District's general education or special education program. Students are entitled to educational services, in or out of school, within five school days. Generally, the student will not be allowed to participate in any [extracurricular](#) programs or school events such as athletic competitions, class trips, graduation, proms, etc. Suspended students are not allowed on school grounds without the permission of the Superintendent.

### ***Student's Rights for Short-Term Suspension (removal for 10 school days or fewer)***

- Oral or written notice of charges and student's due process rights to be provided to the student and student's parents/guardians as soon as practical; an explanation of evidence supporting the charges when they are denied by a student; an informal hearing prior to the suspension, if practical, where the student has an opportunity to present his/her side of the story;
- Notification to the student's parents/guardians of removal, prior to the end of the school day on which the decision to suspend was made; and



- If a student with a disability is suspended, educational services shall be provided according to the student's IEP.

***Student Rights for Long-Term Suspension (removal for more than 10 school days)***

- Immediate notification of charges to the student and parents/guardian, prior to removal; supervision of the student while he/she is waiting to be removed;
- An informal hearing prior to suspension;
- Written notification to parents/guardians within two school days of the suspension, stating the specific charges, facts, and the student's due process rights; written notice that further engagement by the student in conduct warranting expulsion shall amount to a knowing and voluntary waiver of the student's right to a free public education, in the event that a decision to expel the student is made by the Board of Education;
- A list of witnesses and their statements or affidavits (if any), information on the right of the student to secure an attorney, and a list of legal resources available in the community;
- Educational services, either in or out of school, within five days of the suspension;
- A formal hearing, 30 calendar days following the day the student is suspended, before the Board. During the hearing, the student can confront and cross-examine witnesses, where there is a question of fact, present his or her own defense and produce oral testimony or written supporting affidavits;
- A written decision by the Board will be provided within five school days of the closing of the formal hearing;
- The decision of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education within 90 days;
- Unless otherwise determined by the Board, the suspension may not be continued beyond the Board's second regular meeting following the suspension;
- The determination to continue a suspension shall be based on the nature and severity of the offense, the removal decision, and the results of testing, evaluations, and assessments;
- The determination shall be reviewed at each subsequent Board meeting; and
- The Superintendent shall determine when the student can return to the general education program, receive alternative instruction, or be subject to the expulsion process.

For legal assistance with disciplinary matters, you may contact the following:

Northeast New Jersey Legal Services  
 Bergen County Office  
 61 Kansas Street  
 Hackensack, New Jersey 07601  
 (201) 487-2166

Bergen County Bar Association  
 George W. Neiman Law Building  
 15 Bergen Street  
 Hackensack, New Jersey 07601  
 (201) 488-0032

**Community Resources**

The following community-based health and social service provider agency is available to support the student and his/her family: Care Plus NJ, (201)265-8200 or Bergen County's Resource for Youth & Families in Need, (201)336-7350.

**Students with Disabilities**

Generally, students with disabilities may be removed by a school official, including the Principal/designee, for no more than 10 consecutive or cumulative school days. However, a manifestation determination must be conducted, if a student is removed for more than 10 consecutive school days or is subjected to a series of short-term removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year and because of factors such as the length of the removals, the total amount of time the student is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

If, during the manifestation determination, the IEP Team determines that:

1. The conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability; or

2. The conduct in question was the direct result of the District's failure to implement the IEP, then, the behavior will be deemed a manifestation of the student's disability.

If the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, then the CST will conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the student. If such a plan is already in place, then the CST will modify, if necessary, to address the behavior.

### **Fighting**

Differences of opinion should in all cases be settled by talking through the problem rather than by fighting. Students are encouraged to ask for peer mediation or to request assistance from a teacher, counselor, or Assistant Principal in settling conflicts. Fighting for any reason will not be tolerated, and if it occurs, the involved students will be suspended from school.

### **Endangering Others**

Any student, who is known to be in possession of anything dangerous to others, such as a firecracker, will be reported to the Assistant Principal. The student will give up the article, and the parent/guardian will be notified. Bringing such articles to school shows poor judgment and the student may expect the loss of some privileges, suspension from school, or both. Illegal items and activities will be reported to the police.

### **Weapons and Firearms**

The District prohibits weapons, including, but not limited to, guns of any sort (including pellet, B-B, and stun guns), knives, slingshots, chains, box cutters, and any other object that can be used to inflict serious bodily injury, on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and on any transportation vehicle provided by the District. Weapons include imitation firearms. "Toy weapons" are strictly prohibited. Any student, convicted or adjudicated delinquent for committing a crime while in possession of a firearm, or any student found in possession of a firearm on school grounds, on any transportation vehicle provided by the District, or at school-sponsored functions, shall be immediately removed **for at least one calendar year** and be placed in an alternative education program. If none is available, the student will be entitled to home instruction, or other out-of-school instruction, until placement in an alternative setting is available.

Any student who commits an assault with a weapon upon a student, teacher, administrator, board member, or other Board employee, on school grounds, on any transportation vehicle provided by the District, or at a school-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the school's general education program **for a period not exceeding one calendar year**. The District will place the student in an alternative education program in accordance with the law. If none is available, the student will be entitled to home instruction, or other out-of-school instruction, until placement in an alternative setting is available.

Any student who is found in possession of a weapon, other than a firearm, on school grounds, on any transportation vehicle provided by the District, or at a school-sponsored function shall be immediately removed from the school's general education program **for at least 10 (ten) school/calendar days**. The District will place the student in an alternative education program in accordance with the law. If none is available, the student will be entitled to home instruction, or other out-of-school instruction, until placement in an alternative setting is available.

### **Gang Insignia/Activity**

Students shall not wear or possess any clothing, jewelry, symbol, or other object that may evidence membership in or affiliation with any gang. A student shall not commit any act, verbal or non-verbal, in furtherance of the interests of any gang or gang activity.

## **Substance Abuse**

The District prohibits the use, possession, and or distribution of drugs and alcohol on or near school grounds, at any event away from the school grounds that is sponsored by the District, and on any transportation vehicle provided by the District. The District has established consequences for drug and alcohol offenses and for any student who does not follow through on the recommendations for treatment or evaluation for alcohol or other drug abuse and related behaviors. ([District Policy 5530](#))

Any student who is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be immediately sent for a medical examination including drug and alcohol testing. The student will be disciplined if found to be under the influence, in possession of drugs, alcohol, or related paraphernalia, or involved in the distribution of substances. A report will be made to the police. The student will be required to submit to a formal substance abuse assessment and the student must comply with all treatment recommendations. Failure to do so will subject the student to further discipline including long-term suspension.

## **Smoking and Tobacco**

The District prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco products by students, staff, and visitors at any time in school buildings, on school grounds, at events sponsored by the District away from school, and on any transportation vehicle supplied by the District, per [District Policy 5533](#). “Smoking” means “the burning of, inhaling from, exhaling the smoke from, or the possession of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, or any other matter or substance which contains tobacco or any other matter that can be smoked or the inhaling or exhaling of smoke or vapor from an electronic smoking device.” This also includes the use of smokeless tobacco and snuff. The use of an electronic smoking device is also prohibited. “Electronic smoking device” is defined as “an electronic device that can be used to deliver nicotine or other substances to the person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, an electronic cigarette, cigar, cigarillo, pipe, or any cartridge or other component of the device or related product.” ([District Policy 5533](#)).

## **INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR**

**District policy prohibits inappropriate behavior constituting sexual discrimination and harassment, and/or any sexual behavior between students.** Students must be mindful that New Jersey law prohibits a broad range of **conduct between students (and others) which may constitute “criminal sexual contact”** (as defined by NJ criminal statutes, **as applicable to juveniles**, and which is not limited to actual physical contact) and more serious crimes.

Students are entitled to feel and be safe while under the School’s supervision. “Sexual contact” (physical or otherwise) is absolutely prohibited between staff (or other members of the school community) and any and all students. If any student, staff member, volunteer, or any other person is concerned that such conduct (attempted or actual) has occurred, is occurring, or is about to occur, such concern must be immediately reported to the Affirmative Action Officer and the Principal/designee.

## **Academic Dishonesty including Plagiarism/Cheating**

Academic dishonesty is strictly prohibited whether in term papers, themes, essays, reports, images, take-home examinations, and all other academic work. Plagiarism includes use, without acknowledgement, of the ideas, words, formulas, textual materials, online services, computer programs, etc. of another person, or in any way presenting the work of another person as one’s own. Falsifications, including forging signatures, altering answers after they have been graded, the insertion of answers after the fact, the erasure of grader’s marking, and other acts that allow for falsely taking credit, are prohibited. Consequences include, but are not limited to: reprimand, suspension, loss of credit for all the work that is plagiarized, and imposition of community service.

## **Teaneck Middle Schools' Code of Conduct**

Examples of misconduct are listed in categories according to seriousness: Level I is least serious; Level IV is most serious. The list indicates the MINIMUM action to be taken by the school staff and administration, and it is intended to provide guidance. The gravity of any single offense or repetition of offenses (whether or not the offenses are the same or different) may result in more serious consequences.

### **Level I**

This category includes misbehaviors, which interfere with orderly classroom operation. These are usually handled by the teacher and include such things as lateness to class, unnecessary talking during the lesson, teasing or bothering another student during the lesson, and leaving class without permission. *Warnings, after-school detention with the teacher, consultation with the guidance counselor, and/or parent/guardian contact are some of the usual consequences.*

The wearing of inappropriate attire—clothing that is likely to create, or does create, a disruption, disorder, or undue distraction in school, or such as to endanger the student's own safety or health—falls into this category, and is most often handled by a warning and a requirement for change. In extreme cases, a parent/guardian may be contacted and asked to provide a change of clothes.

### **Level II**

Misconduct that falls into this category is again within the classroom and is *directly handled by the teacher*. The use of obscene or disrespectful language in class, talking back to the teacher, refusal to follow directions given by an adult staff member, verbal confrontation, physical scuffles, cutting class, misconduct in detention, and the forging of late notes or excuses, are examples of misbehavior at this level. The parent/guardian shall be informed of the behavior. *Consequences are usually in the form of more than one detention. Parent/guardian conferences may be required. The teacher may arrange for teaching colleagues, the counselor(s), and/or administrator(s) to be present at the parent/guardian conference.*

### **Level III**

Behavior that falls under this category is more severe, may be illegal, and may occur both in and out of the classroom. In all cases, the Assistant Principal's office is informed, and the teacher fills out a formal referral report. Parents/guardians are informed and a parent/guardian conference is usually required before the student is allowed back into school or a particular class. Fighting anywhere on or off school grounds, thefts, swearing at a teacher or other adult staff member, refusing to report for teacher-assigned detention, destruction of school property or the property of others, bullying, harassment, intimidation, cyber-bullying, as well as discrimination/harassment based upon a protected class, are types of behavior which fall into this category. Consequences may include an extended period of detention and/or a combination of in-school or out-of-school suspensions.

Examples of behaviors in the Level III category, which will usually incur extended detention as a minimum consequence, include continued and willful disobedience; and truancy. The administrator(s) may require the student to come for lunch/recess detention and/or after school for an extended period of time.

Examples of behaviors in the Level III category, which will usually incur in-school suspension, include: cutting detention; endangering any person or school property; and theft.

Examples of behaviors in the Level III category, which will usually incur out-of-school suspension, include: fighting; bullying; harassment; intimidation; cyber-bullying; discrimination based upon a protected class; extortion; malicious injury to persons; and trespassing (being in the building or anywhere on school grounds unlawfully or while on suspension). Fighting is a serious offense that may result in injury. Fighting usually incurs an out-of-school suspension of 5 days.

***Depending on the circumstances, the age, and the prior disciplinary record of the students involved, and the outcome of parent/guardian conferences, the administrator(s) may substitute a combination of extended detention, the assignment of a major project, and/or some form of community service as an alternative to an out-of-school suspension, for fighting or other serious misconduct.***

#### **Level IV**

Behaviors that are illegal in nature and/or directly affect the safety or well-being of staff or students, fall into this category. Possession, sale, distribution, and/or use of alcoholic beverages, drugs, or weapons; assault; threats of violence or other harm; verbal and physical harassment of students or staff members; bomb threats; threatening telephone calls to the school or to the home of a staff member; possession of fireworks or any explosive devices into the building; major vandalism; setting of a fire; and pulling false fire alarms come under Level IV. *Immediate suspension from school, followed by a parent/guardian conference, and a consequence determined during the conference is required. Local authorities may be involved. Severe cases may require action by the Teaneck Board of Education, up to and including expulsion.*

In determining the seriousness of the misconduct, the administrator(s) may refer to the progressive discipline code approved for use at Teaneck High School.

#### **Social Probation**

Students who willfully and continually persist in misconduct or tardiness may be placed on SOCIAL PROBATION. The student and the student's parents will be notified in writing of the duration and specific limitations.

Students who are placed on Social Probation are prohibited from attending all extracurricular activities (anything beyond school hours including, but not limited to dances, trips, and concerts). Any exceptions are at the discretion of the school administration. Social Probation may be reduced upon successful completion of a probationary period as determined by the school administration. Please note that students may be placed directly on Social Probation at the discretion of the school administration. Any student violating social probation is subject to an out-of-school suspension.

## Point System

Students at the Middle School level are expected to develop a measure of self-discipline and control which reflects their increasing maturity and sense of responsibility; therefore, a point system is in place to support student growth. Any student who violates school regulations will be penalized with points according to the scale. A student who accumulates **12 points** is placed on Social Probation. However, a student may be placed directly on Social Probation at the discretion of the school administration. Please note that students may be placed directly on Social Probation at the discretion of the school administration.

Disciplinary actions are not limited to points assigned.

	Point Range
1. Failure to report to the office when tardy to school	2
2. Students in halls, lavatory, or unauthorized areas without a passbook	2
3. Inappropriate conduct	6-12
4. Use of profanity or obscene language, either spoken, computer generated, or on apparel	2-6
5. Insubordination to staff or disruption of the learning environment	4-12
6. Cutting, failure to report for tutoring, or teacher-assigned detentions	3
7. Leaving school grounds without permission	6
8. Vandalism anywhere on school grounds or in the school building	3-6
9. Fighting	6-12
10. Unsportsmanlike conduct or inappropriate behavior at any school function	3-6
11. Forgery or alteration of school papers, records, or school passes	3-6
12. Inappropriate conduct while on, boarding, or leaving a school bus	3-6
13. Theft anywhere on school grounds or anywhere in the school building	6-12
14. Possession of tobacco products	6
15. Violation of network computer policy	6-12
16. Cutting class	
1 <sup>st</sup> time	2
2 <sup>nd</sup> time	6
3 <sup>rd</sup> time	6
17. Endangering or causing injury to a student or faculty member	6-12
18. Being removed from class for any disciplinary reason	3-6
19. Unauthorized use of school elevator	3
20. Playing cards or gambling	2
21. Tardiness to school (after 3 tardies)	2

## Infractions

This is a list of some examples of offenses and their definitions. Please refer to prior paragraphs to determine under which level the offense belongs.

<b>Offense</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Inappropriate Language</i>	Non-threatening, non-directed verbal messages used within conversation that include swearing, name-calling, or use of words in an inappropriate way.
<i>Defiance/disrespect</i>	Refusal to follow classroom or school rules, or staff directions, talking back and/or socially rude interactions.
<i>Disruptive Behavior</i>	Intentional behavior causing interruption in class or school activities/functions. Disruptions include loud talking, making noises with materials or body parts, throwing objects, getting out of seat, play fighting, horseplay, or otherwise distracting classmates.
<i>Horseplay</i>	Non-threatening physical interactions
<i>Missing Detention</i>	Unauthorized missing of detention
<i>Lying/cheating/plagiarizing</i>	Students must not use, submit or attempt to obtain data or answers dishonestly, by deceit or by any means other than those authorized by the teacher.
<i>Misuse of pass</i>	Using a pass for a reason other than it is intended.
<i>Tardy</i>	Student is late to class or the start of a school day without a pass.
<i>Dress code violation</i>	The wearing of inappropriate attire – clothing that is likely to create, or does create: a disruption; disorder; undue distraction in school; or such as to endanger the student’s own safety or health.
<i>Use of electronic communication devices</i>	Electronic communication devices must be turned off and out of sight during school hours.
<i>Misuse of technology</i>	Inappropriate or irresponsible use of technology privilege.
<i>Cutting class/homeroom</i>	Unauthorized missing of an assigned period or activity.
<i>Abusive/inappropriate interactions with peers and adults</i>	Threatening verbal or gestural interactions with peers or staff that are directed toward someone including swearing, name-calling, put-downs, making fun of or negatively talking about a person or their family, or gestures in an inappropriate way.
<i>Fighting/physical aggression</i>	Actions involving serious physical contact where an injury may occur (i.e. hitting, pushing, shoving, tripping, kicking, hair pulling and other physical acts).
<i>Physical assault on school personnel</i>	Intentional aggressive physical actions directed at school personnel.
<i>Sexual Misconduct</i>	Inappropriate actions or behaviors by touching or referring to, verbally or in writing, one’s own private body parts or those of another person. Included in sexual misconduct are actions involving touching of a sexual nature, with or without consent of the other party.
<i>Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation</i>	Any gesture or written, verbal or physical act that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory handicap, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus and that: 1. a reasonable person would know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his/her property; 2. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.
<i>Property damage</i>	Students must not cause damage, break or destroy school property or anyone’s personal belongings. Examples are writing in school textbooks, school property; damaging desks or computer equipment; intentionally clogging the plumbing system, etc.
<i>Theft</i>	Student is in the possession of, having possessed, or being responsible for removing someone else’s property.
<i>Forgery</i>	Students must not trick, or cause someone to be tricked by not telling the truth. Students must not sign or give a name other than their own. The forging of late notes or excuses are also examples.
<i>Use/possession of tobacco</i>	Student is in possession of or caught using tobacco products.

<i>Use/possession of drugs/alcohol</i>	Students must not use, be under the influence of, or buy or sell alcohol or illegal drugs to school or school activities. This also includes any substance made to look like, or represented to be illegal drugs or alcohol and any related paraphernalia.
<i>Bomb threat/false alarm</i>	Student delivers message (electronically, verbally, written or gesturally) or orchestrates the delivery of a message of possible explosive materials being on school grounds, near school grounds, and or pending explosions; tampering with, pulling or orchestrating the pulling of an unwarranted fire alarm.
<i>Possession of a dangerous weapon</i>	Students must not handle, transmit, or use as a dangerous weapon, (real or look alike), an instrument capable of harming or creating the impression of causing bodily harm to another person.
<i>Extortion</i>	Extortion means getting money, promises, or favors by using a threat or force. Students must not make a person do anything he or she does not want to do by using threats or force.
<i>Cyber-Bullying</i>	Verbal harassment that occurs during online activities. Use of electronic information and communication devices, to include but not limited to, email messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communication, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that: 1. deliberately threatens, harasses, or intimidates an individual or group of individuals; 2. places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual's property; 3. has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.



## Grievance Procedure

A grievance is a formal written claim by a student or group of students who are aggrieved by reason of the application of any school rule or regulation, or of an order by a staff member or by reason of any deficiency in the school system which requires remedial action. A grievance may also involve an alleged violation related to discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, age, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, disability, or social or economic status or sexual orientation.

If the matter concerns an allegation of discrimination including harassment, grievance and any appeal must be made in writing to the affirmative action officer who shall make an attempt, after investigation, to resolve the matter. The principal shall be provided with a copy of the appeal. If the matter is not resolved by the Affirmative Action Officers within ten days, the officer's findings shall be reported to the Superintendent of Schools.

If the grievance cannot be resolved informally or whenever the grievant believes that such a procedure is inappropriate or impractical, the grievant shall file a written statement setting forth the following information:

1. A brief statement of the specific nature of the grievance and the facts giving rise to it, and the steps previously pursued.
2. A brief statement of the relief desired.
3. A brief statement of reasons why the grievant believes he/she is entitled to the relief sought.

The written statement shall be delivered to the school principal who shall furnish a copy to the staff member involved. If the grievance concerns the principal, it shall be forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools. A conference will be scheduled within ten school days following receipt of the grievance, which shall be conducted informally, with each party having an opportunity to be heard. The principal shall render a written decision within five school days following the conference and a copy of the same shall be provided to all interested parties.

If either party is dissatisfied with the decision, he or she may appeal within ten school days following receipt of the written decision. The appeal shall be in writing and to the Superintendent of Schools. All interested parties shall be provided a copy of the appeal, which must contain a statement of reasons upon which the appeal is based.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the Superintendent may decide the matter on the papers or hold a conference. The Superintendent will render a written decision to all interested parties within ten days following receipt of the papers or the conference, if one is held. If the Board is required to act, the Superintendent must make his/her recommendations within ten days of receipt of the grievance with copies to all parties.

If any party is dissatisfied with the decision of the Superintendent, he or she may request a hearing before the Board by filing a written notice of appeal to the Board Secretary within ten days of the Superintendent's decision. The notice shall briefly state the basis of the appeal and copies shall be provided to all parties, the principal and Superintendent. The Board Secretary shall notify all parties of the hearing date. The parties may present their positions to the Board orally or in writing and the Board may call witnesses and experts as it deems necessary to aid in resolving the matter. The Board shall forward its determination to all parties within thirty days of the hearing. The Board's decision shall be subject to review as may be available under Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes. Failure to appeal a grievance to the next step within the specified time limits shall be deemed to be acceptance of the decision at that step.

Despite anything to the contrary herein, in a charge of discrimination, the grievant, at any time may file a complaint with the County Superintendent, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights or the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, or the New Jersey Department of Education. Addresses are available in the office of the district affirmative action officer.

All timelines may be extended by the Superintendent as reasonably requested and in accordance with Board policy and regulations.

## DISCIPLINE CODE

The list of offenses and consequences has been designed to provide students, staff, and parents with a base of information. It is not meant to be exhaustive, as no list can cover each and every violation and possible consequences. The District reserves the right to take different disciplinary action than what is provided for herein and to consider mitigating circumstances on a case-by-case basis, as it deems appropriate. In the event any offense occurs while a student is subject to discipline, additional discipline will be imposed for the new offense. Note that the \*\* denotes offenses that will be reported to the Teaneck Police Department as required by the Memorandum of Agreement.

### PUPIL DISCIPLINE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

INFRACTIONS	MIDDLE SCHOOL		
	1 <sup>st</sup> offense	2 <sup>nd</sup> offense	3 <sup>rd</sup> offense
<i>Arson**</i>	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension / expulsion
<i>Assault Student to Student**</i>	OSS/ Reflection Paper	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension/expulsion
<i>Assault Student to Teacher**</i>	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension/reflection paper	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension/expulsion
<i>Bombs / Explosives**</i>	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/BOE review for possible long term suspension/ expulsion
<i>Bus Misconduct</i>	Detention	ISS reflection paper	OSS
<i>Cheating / Plagiarism</i>	Detention/ paper/parent conference	OSS/ parent conference / zero on assignment	OSS/ parent conference / zero on assignment
<i>Disobedience / Defiance / Disrespect</i>	Detention/ Parent conference	In-School Detention / Parent Conference	ISS/ Reflection paper / parent-teacher conference
<i>Disorderly Conduct/Pranks</i>	OSS/ Reflection paper/ parent conference	OSS/Reflection paper/ parent conference	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Dress Code</i>	Parent Notification / In-School Detention	Parent Notification / In-School Detention	Parent Notification / ISS
<i>Electronic Devices / Cell Phones</i>	Confiscation / Student must pick up device after school	Confiscation / Detention/Parent Notification/ Student must pick up device after Detention	Confiscation/Detention/Parent Meeting/Parent must pick up device after meeting
<i>Endangerment to School or School Property**</i>	10 day OSS	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension/expulsion
<i>Extortion / Coercion / Blackmail**</i>	OSS	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Failure to Follow Administrative Directive</i>	ISS	OSS	OSS
<i>Failure to Report to Detention</i>	Detention	ISS	OSS
<i>Fighting</i>	ISS	OSS	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Firearms**</i>	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension/expulsion

<i>Forgery</i>	Parent conference/ Detention	ISS	OSS
<i>Gambling</i>	Detention	ISS	OSS
<i>Gang Activity / Insignia**</i>	OSS	OSS	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Graffiti</i>	Detention	ISS	OSS
<i>Gum Chewing</i>	Warning	Detention	ISS
<i>Hazing**</i>	OSS / Reflection paper	10 day OSS / BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension/expulsion
<i>HIB (Harassment Intimidation and Bullying) Includes Cyber Bullying</i>	See HIB Policy #5512	See HIB Policy #5512	See HIB Policy #5512
<i>In School Before/After School Without Supervision</i>	Warning	Detention	ISS
<i>Leaving School Property Without Authority</i>	In-School Detention	ISS	OSS
<i>Locker Usage for Illegal Purposes**</i>	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Misuse of Technology</i>	Reflection Paper / Detention	In-School Detention / Reflection Paper / Suspension of student account access	ISS / Parent Conference / Suspension of student account access
<i>Physical Scuffle/Horse Play</i>	Detention	In-School Detention	ISS
<i>Sexual Harassment</i>	OSS	10 day OSS/BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension/expulsion
<i>Sexual Misconduct</i>	OSS	OSS	10 day OSS/BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Smoking /Tobacco/Vaping</i>	OSS	OSS	OSS
<i>Substance Abuse**</i>	See Substance Abuse Policy 5530	See Substance Abuse Policy 5530	See Substance Abuse Policy 5530
<i>Tardiness / Cutting</i>	See Attendance Policy 5200	See Attendance Policy 5200	See Attendance Policy 5200
<i>Theft**</i>	OSS	OSS	OSS
<i>Threats to Staff / Others Without Weapon</i>	OSS/Board review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Trespassing / Wrongful Entry**</i>	OSS	OSS	10 day OSS/BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Truancy / Unauthorized Absence / Excessive Absences</i>	See attendance policy 5200	See attendance policy 5200	See attendance policy 5200
<i>Use of Profanity / Obscene Language</i>	Detention / Apology letter	Detention / Apology letter	ISS
<i>Vandalism**</i>	ISS	OSS	OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension
<i>Verbal Confrontation</i>	Detention	ISD	ISS/OSS
<i>Weapons**</i>	10 day OSS	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension	10 day OSS/ BOE review for possible long term suspension/expulsion